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SOCCER WEEKLY

AUSSIE & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

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EDITOR: Aidan Ormond

LAYOUT CO-ORDINATOR: A.D. Akratos

LAYOUT/TYPESetting: Mary Quarty

Alamita Vea

SCANDISK: Alex Stafakas

COLOUR SCANS: Bill Hawthorne

FILM PLANNING: Nick Rekounis, Nick Phillips

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Melbin

CORRESPONDENTS

MELBOURNE: Dwyght Tuffnell

QUEENSLAND: Glenn Davis

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Richard Kreider

WOMEN'S SOCCER: Janene Mar

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Roy Hay, Craig

Wilson, Daryl Katz, Rebecca Stanton, Daniel

Giorlando (W. Exp.), Bonnie Merslades

Sydney Reporter: John Economos

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LIPPI QUILTS JUVENTUS

Marcello Lippi has resigned as coach of two-time defending Italian League champion Juventus of Turin, abruptly ending a successful tenure that hit a low point this season.

Lippi made the surprise announcement to reporters right after the 4-2 home loss to Parma that dropped Juventus into ninth place in the 18-team league. It is the worst shape the club has been in since Lippi, 50, joined the team in 1994 and immediately revitalized it.

"If I am the squad's problem, then I resign. Let's see if this team can get going if it no longer has

Lippi," he said on Sunday. "I tried everything possible to wake the team up."

His five-year contract with the club expires in June and Lippi already had announced he would not extend the deal. Carlo Ancelotti, fired by Parma after last season, was named last month as Lippi's successor, but it was not immediately clear if he would step in right away.

Lippi has been linked to the coaching job at Internazionale of Milan for next season.

See all the Serie A news on page 24.



LEARN SOCCER THE BRAZILIAN WAY

The Football Academy of Excellence (FAE) starts its new term of Brazilian football coaching on February 22 with a few exciting bonuses for its students.

The regular program of Brazilian coaching offered for all players 7-17 in Concord, Miranda, Fairfield and new centre in Penrith begins its 12 week terms on February 22.

Several academy coaches have just returned from Brazil where they have received their Senior Coaching Diplomas. One of them ex-Marconi/Socceroo Paul Degney says the link has never been stronger. "Apart from junior groups the Senior Coaches in Brazil suggested we commence a special program dedicated to ELITE PLAYERS."

"From February 22 through to December, Youth league players U/13 to U/16 can enrol to form two special squads that will train only once a week through the season and twice a week

off season."

Director Leon Gardikiotis adds: "We know these players have a demanding season so once a week as an elite squad at the academy will compliment their team training. In the off season these squads will train twice a week and play against international teams."

The Brazilian FAE is the only private academy to have recognition from the Technical Committee of Soccer Australia and also be endorsed by the Brazilian Football Academy of Rio de Janeiro.

These elite academy squads have been invited to play in an elite tournament in Brazil against the best teams of Rio such as Flamengo and Vasco de Gama as well as train at the top academy in Brazil.

Head coach Vince Colagiuri feels this is a step forward for elite youth: "We are here to benefit and assist all Youth league clubs and coaches, offering this link to Brazil to these kids is a chance of a lifetime!"

The FAE recently returned from Fiji where they coached the National U/17 team as well as Fiji's best Youth Development coaches.

The Brazilian Football Academy of Excellence have been invited to consult the Oceania Confederation of FIFA for the operations of the new academy built in New Zealand which will be formally opened by new FIFA boss Sepp Blatter and Technical Expert Michel Platini.

Apart from the centres the FAE is available for clubs camps, coaching seminars and special skill sessions around Australia. For more information contact the FAE on (02) 9550-2022 Fax: (02) 9550-2544 or E m a i l : brazilianfae@ozemail.com.au



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Australian News

SOCCER 21

By Bonnie Merisades

The long-awaited Soccer Australia Strategic Plan is expected to be released soon. The Plan, to be called Soccer 21, is to be a blueprint for development of the game over the next five years.

It will be interesting to see whether it is an all-encompassing plan which addresses every aspect of the game, or whether it has become a document of compromise between State and national Federations and other interests.

Outgoing Soccer Australia Director, Don Di Fabrizio, alludes to competing interests in his report to the Soccer Australia Annual General Meeting to be held on 28 February in Sydney. In his work to amalgamate the two former referees' associations, he talks of "many set backs caused by a minority of people".

The important aspect of this is that Mr Di Fabrizio and his colleagues worked through these setbacks and achieved the outcome they wanted — of one association — and we can only hope that Soccer 21 is able to be implemented with a spirit of co-operation between administrators, sponsors, players, the media and fans.

Soccer Australia suffered a decline in both sponsorship and television royalties, in the twelve months to September 1998 compared with the same period in 1997.

It should be noted that the agreements with the International Management Group (for marketing) and Channel 7 (for television) were made subsequent to September 1998, so the full-year effect of the benefits flowing from these two arrangements are yet to be realised.

However, the decline in sponsorship was

very significant and must be of enormous concern to the directors.

Current research shows a trend internationally for organisations to spend a smaller proportion of their marketing and promotional budgets on sponsorship, with the consequence of there being fewer big 'players' in the sponsorship field and an increasing number of claims for attention and leverage for the potential sponsor.

Having the right product for the right sponsor is critical. Football is not only competing with other sports, but also the arts sector which is a very aggressive participant in the sponsorship market — and has Australian Bureau of Statistics data which show that more Australians attend cultural events than sporting events.

The current directors of Soccer Australia are pinning their hopes on the opening of the new Olympic Stadium in Homebush in June 1999, the 2000 Olympics and the encouraging levels of support for the Ericsson Cup around Australia — particularly through the work of Perth Glory and Northern Spirit — to be the start of something big for the game.

The Olympic Stadium opening between Australia and the FIFA All Stars, in particular, should be spectacular, and it is an event which many football followers throughout Australia are eagerly awaiting. The directors believe that the match will "undoubtedly be the greatest soccer match ever staged in the country and arguably one of the greatest sporting spectacles ever seen in Australia."

Certainly IMG and Channel 7 have the stage set to make a big impact — and Soccer Australia's Strategic Plan could hit the decks just at the right time.

MAN WITH THE GOLDEN TOUCH



Dave Mitchell: Honesty is very important.

By Daniel Giorlando and Aidan Ormond

Sydney United's player-coach David Mitchell is well aware of the pressures that coaches are put through, but the pressure that Mitchell has had to endure over the past two seasons far outweighs those of any other current coach.

The problems of rebuilding a team from almost scratch following the loss of key players — who are now seeking their trade overseas, sees a United team currently full of young and eager players blended in with the experience and coolness of the likes of David Barrett and Mitchell himself.

But the biggest problem that Mitch has faced during his time as coach has been the continual financial crisis at the club, a problem which threatens the expulsion of clubs like them from the league as Soccer Australia seeks entities able to survive on their own two financial feet.

Mitchell admits that there were some hard times, but the worst seems to be behind United in the race for the title.

"Things at the club are looking better since the arrival of administrators. The players are being paid for a start."

"Hopefully the club can get sorted out for next season and be in the league but if they can't, is there sense in going on if they can't fulfil their responsibilities?"

One thing that is evident when watching United is the spirit and unity between the players and the coach, and this is one thing that Mitchell is happy to see.

"The players play for each other. I don't have any prima donnas in the team and we are in this together."

"I have a good relationship with the players and their relationship with me is based on mutual trust and respect. I want the players to be honest with me and as long as they play to the best of their ability and they put the effort in, the rest will come."

United's new crop of young players include one of the most confident strike forces in the league, Joel Griffiths and Mile Sterjovski, and so far the two have filled the hole from the last exodus of Pumas.

"They are working for each other and both complement each other well. They have different styles in their own right and they are both going to be big players and hopefully go on to represent Australia at international level and play overseas and have big futures."

"Joel reminds me of myself in my younger days. He holds up the ball well, he is pretty quick, brave and getting better and better each week."

And how about the survival of the Sydney United in the Ericsson Cup?

"It's a week-to-week basis but I'm confident we can see out the season. Mind you, clubs like Spirit and Glory are showing how it's done, that privatisation is the go."

See Sydney United's paupers to princes on the centre pages this week, a tribute to a group of players that have exhibited those wholly Australian characteristics of mateship and determination during the hard times.

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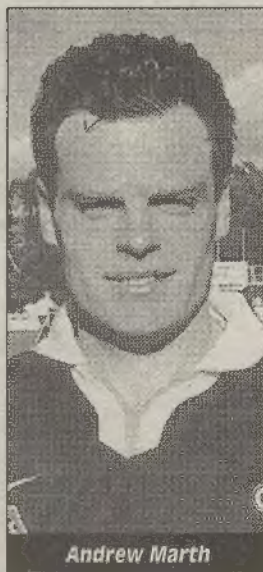
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Australian News

FALCONS KEEP TRUCKIN' ON DESPITE NEGATIVE PRESS

By Aidan Ormond

Ericsson Cup strugglers Gippsland Falcons have announced a sponsorship deal with international trucking company Iveco.

The deal is for the next 12 months and is believed to be upwards of \$100,000.

New club General Manager Mike Answerth, who replaced Mark Brady last week, said that the deal was a vote of confidence in the club, particularly after the recent 'Australian' newspaper report highlighting the club's debts.

"Yes we have debts but you must remember, we have assets valued at around \$10 million," he said.

"We own the freehold land on the ground, plus the social club so it's not as if we don't have the resources."

"Of course we want to play in the NSL next year, and we are confident but it's up to Soccer Australia."

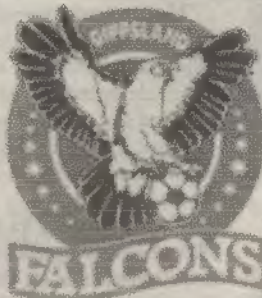
Iveco is a truck company based in Dandenong in Melbourne. It has links to the worldwide FIAT organisation.

Falcons President, Fred Di Sipio, added that the sponsorship was a great show of confidence in the club. "We are delighted with the support given by Iveco and we will do all in our power to promote the company."

Iveco's director of customer service, Rod Williams, said in a statement that the company and club had been negotiating with the club for six months on the deal. "Gippsland is an important area for us and we believe that Gippsland Falcons have the capacity to assist us in our marketing."

The Iveco name will be on the back of the Falcons' shirts. The club has also signed a deal with the boot makers Valsport.

In other Falcons news, star striker Archie Thompson's deal with Carlton is still being negotiated. Carlton want the player now, but Gippsland are holding out for a fee of around \$30,000-\$50,000.



YOUNG SOCCEROOS PREPARE FOR WYC

National Youth Coach Les Scheinflug has announced a powerful Young Socceroo squad in preparation for the WYC coming up in Nigeria.

The camp will be held at Valentine Sports Park, home of the NSW Soccer Federation from Monday 22nd to Friday 26th February inclusive, with the following players in attendance:

Player

Anthony Braden
Jason Culina
Michael Turnbull
Mile Sterjovski
Bradley Swancott
Brett Emerton
Martin John
Adriano Cuzzupe
Travis Dodd
Eddy Bosnar

Club

Adelaide City
Sydney Olympic
AIS
Sydney United
Newcastle Breakers
Sydney Olympic
Melbourne Knights
South Melbourne
Adelaide City
Northern Spirit



Spirit's Paul Wearne

Player

David Terminello
Ivan Ergic
Lindsay Wilson
Michael Santalab
Simon Colosimo
Matthew Langdon
Marco Bresciano
Paul Reid
Christian Care
Daniel Watkins
Michael Cuniço
Joel Griffiths
Paul Wearne
Nick Sabljak
Danny Invincible

Club

Adelaide City
AIS
Canberra Cosmos
Sydney United
Carlton
Northern Spirit
Carlton SC
Wollongong Wolves
Marconi Fairfield
Northern Spirit
Northern Spirit
Sydney United
Northern Spirit
Adelaide City
Marconi Fairfield



Pumas' Mile Sterjovski

There are also four overseas based players who are unable to attend the Sydney training camp:

Vince Grella from Empoli (Italy) Nick Rizzo Crystal Palace (UK) John Maisano Westerlo (Belgium) and Michael Ferrante (West Ham).

The Young Socceroos will play two friendly internationals against the Korean U/20 team during the week. Following the camp, a final squad of 18 players will be selected to compete at the World Youth Championships (3-24 April 1999), with the Young Socceroos departing Australia March 10 for further training camps in Holland and Spain before travelling to Lagos, Nigeria on March 30.

In other news ... Richard Kreider reports that Perth Glory are hoping they have found a solution to their current form slump after securing the signature of nomadic Socceroo striker Alistair Edwards last Thursday. "I'm thrilled to be back home and can't wait to play for Glory," he said.

Edwards returned to WA because his wife is expecting their third child and they would like it to be born in Perth where all his family is living. The 30-year old is the 23rd signing for the club this season and the third in a month following the acquisition of tall defenders Craig Deans and Gianfranco Circati.

Edwards, who was born in Whyalla South Australia, played his early soccer with Perth club Kwinina United before featuring with the likes of Singapore side Tyrwhitt and their national team, Malaysian clubs Johor, Selangor and Sarawak, Scottish giants Rangers, and English club Millwall.

His last club was Sarawak. Edwards has only played with Sydney Olympic in the National League, where he has made a total of 80 appearances and scored 10 goals. He played with (UTS) Olympic in Perth Glory's first Ericsson Cup game in October 1995. He collected a championship medal with the Sydney side in season 1989/90, on top of countless championship trophies and Golden Boot awards from the Malaysian League competition.

The left-footed forward made his international debut in 1986 with the young Socceroos and his full senior debut came four years later. He has over 20 caps with the Socceroos; his last appearance was last year when he scored the winner in a 2-1 victory against South Korea in the Four-Nation Series.

It is anticipated Edwards will link up with John Markovski in a two-pronged attack.

Edwards' first game was a happy affair; he scored and Glory snapped their losing streak by beating Adelaide Sharks 3-1 away.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PIRATE CAPTURED BY GREEKS

Greg Hagias may not be a name known to the vast majority of the Australian Soccer public. However, the top goalscorer for the South Australian club Port Adelaide Pirates in 1997 and 1998 has signed a contract for three years with Panachaiki F.C. of Patra Greece.

He has been able to secure himself a professional career in soccer after various attempts at Ericsson Cup stardom. Having being under the guidance of Olyroo Coach Raul Blanco whilst at the Adelaide Sharks, Hagias has shown what it takes to make professional status.

A South Australian record transfer fee has been organised for the transfer to the Greek Club, where The Port Adelaide Lion Pirates are now negotiating a Feeder Club situation for the promotion of players unable to secure NSL berths.

Originally Greg Hagias trained with Panathinaikos of Athens for three weeks, but, under the scrutiny of

various talent scouts the Panachaiki Football Club stepped in and signed the budding star striker. Panathinaikos were in the stages of securing a berth for Greg in one of their feeder clubs but were beaten to the finish by the Patra-based Club.

Whilst the young 20yr old Hagias was training with Panachaiki, the press reported that he was a Canadian player under a different name to avoid any poachers after his contract.

The well-respected TV show *Football Mundial* recently screened a segment on Northern Spirit. According to Burnley's Olyroo, Mark Robertson, it scored a fair bit of interest, particularly with the likes of ex-premier league players Ian Crook and Robbie Slater at Spirit.

Robertson told Soccer Australia that the Burnley lads were impressed. "A few of the lads know Ian Crook and Robbie Slater and they wanted to know more about the games, the build-up and the crowds, they were buzzing about the crowd and atmosphere ... they wanted to know of their chances of moving out there."



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Have Your Say

With regard to Ralph Barba's letter in February 2 issue, he and your other readers perhaps would be interested to know that I wrote a similarly worded letter to the Editor of the Herald Sun in response to a flagrantly biased article by a Mrs Cheryl Gritchley headed 'A Game of our Own' that appeared in the December 17 issue of that Victorian paper.

Naturally it espoused AFL as the greatest football code in the world and not unexpectedly, knowing our Victorian media, my letter was neither acknowledged nor published.

I occasionally write letters to the Victorian media when our code of football is either besmirched or incorrectly depicted, but generally they are totally ignored. Perhaps Ralph Barba has more 'clout' than myself, considering his business position and rather than preach to the converted (you and your readers), he and others with similar passion for the 'real football' direct their writing energies to the wider media, particularly when there is an obvious injustice reported.

It would be of special interest to your Victorian

readers to learn that on perusal of the sports pages of interstate newspapers, our code of football gets the worst deal of all when it comes to coverage.

This is particularly so at the larger weekend issues of the major papers in each State during our playing season, when in Victoria our code of football is sometimes completely overlooked.

Peter Sanlino, Seaford Vic

Ed's note: It is up to all World Game fans in Victoria to make their feelings be known.

Remember, if we are not a threat, why do they still attack Soccer? The AFL is running scared and employs the 'denigrate and perpetuate stereotypes' tactic — via a compliant media — that hopefully will filter through to public perception and opinion in that state.

On the 3AW program featuring Gerard Healy, Socceroo Paul Wade is consistently having to defend soccer. The letter in question, written by Ralph Barba, was directed at Gerard Healy and co, and not at Paul Wade who is put in a continually difficult position through the issues raised.

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Australian Features

SOCCKERCHIK ... THAT'S OUR KERRY

By Aidan Ormond

I'm standing outside the members' restaurant at North Sydney Oval waiting to interview Kerry Chikarovski. Perhaps I will be invited to join her table — a gathering of wealthy powerful industrialists sipping champagne, smoking huge Cubans and eating things I can't pronounce?

Is this what happened? Actually, no. When the smiling and down-to-earth Chikarovski motions me to come through we sit cosily together on the concrete stairwell behind the restaurant and, while fans make their way past us up the stairs, we do the interview.

Kerry Chikarovski is a director of NSL powerhouse Northern Spirit. By day, she leads another team, the NSW Liberal Party.

So, what exactly does an NSL director do?

"Well clearly we are the management board of the club, although we are not involved in the day-to-day running of the club we make decisions in relation to things such as sponsorship and the overall management."

Did you think the Northern Spirit phenomenon would be this big so soon?

"We were hoping it would be big. We had done our market research and found there was a real need for a soccer club this side of the harbour. There are lots of kids — 17,000 or so — playing junior soccer in the area we cover so we knew that there was an interest at that level. We were also pretty confident that we could generate interest from the adults as well."

What are the long-term plans for a club like Northern Spirit?

"Clearly what we have done is establish ourselves as a major player in the NSL. What we want to do over time is to develop players. I mean one of the reasons I got involved was to be able to think that one day we could take a kid, a young child, all the way to national representation. So that's part of the vision — youth development. Another part of the vision is to provide heroes for the kids."

So, Kerry, who are your heroes in the Spirit line-up?

(Laughs heartily). "Now look Aidan, if I name one individual in the team I will be in big trouble. But let me say that the players have been tremendous in these last few weeks, really inspirational, it just took them a little time to settle down."

Spoken like a true polli! So, are there any parallels between running a

political team and a soccer team?

"Absolutely. One point about a leader is that they bring together and they develop the strengths of each squad member for the benefit of the team. Arnie (Graham Arnold) has clearly done this for Spirit and I hope that I can do it with my political team."

What about the broader notion of marketing the game in this country?

"Well, what we've done is broaden the base of support. If you walk out through the crowd you will see people from all nationalities and demographics — young people, families, suits coming from work and of course the fans in their Spirit shirts. Australian soccer needs to appeal to a cross-section of the general public, it's what needs to happen because this is the biggest game in the world. And what we do here is provide a relaxed but exciting evening for all."

So is it possible that the growth in crowds is such that you would have to move to a bigger venue?

"Well actually I think that one of the biggest assets we have is the ground here at North Sydney. You are close to the game, it's got a real good feel so I think we will be here for a long time."

The question of Crystal Palace's finances and the way their club is run (Palace chairman Mark Goldberg recently apologised to his fans for the disastrous first six months of his term), is it something that concerns you?

"I think the association with Crystal Palace is a very good one. It gives our players and coaches access to their knowledge and skill and the players have entered into the English game through this association. It is good for us and will continue to be so."

So what would be a perfect 1999 for you?

"A Spirit Grand Final win and an election night victory," she says with a big smile.

So, to finish off who is your favourite player in the world?

"It would have to be Mark Bosnich," she says after much thought. (Chikarovski was a keeper herself during her days as a student overseas, so perhaps it's not surprising that she picks Bozza).

And a tip for the Ericsson Cup?

"You've got to be kidding! There's only one choice."

And on that note she makes her way back to her spot for the game. Typical Soccer-mad fan, here we are chatting, getting on so well but as soon as the teams are on the park, she's gone!



Kerry Chikarovski ... former goalkeeper, Spirit director and political leader.

If Chikarovski does become Premier, NSW will have a leader with immaculate Soccer credentials: player, fan, Soccer Mum (to kids Lisa and Mark) and Director of one of the most successful clubs in Australia.

However, only time will tell if this 'SoccerChik' will end up on a winning side in Soccer and Politics.

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Australian Features

THE PROFESSOR PREPARES OLYMPIC FOR THEIR BIG TEST

By John Economos

UTS Sydney Olympic's studios 41 year old coach Branko Culina has not given up hope of leading the 'Sleeping Giants' of Australian Soccer to its second national championship.

In Olympic's 22-year history, only Mickey Hickman was able to bring such glory to the club, and that was back in 1990.

The 'Five White Knights' who at the end of last season took over Olympic, had been most impressed by Culina's work whilst he was in charge of Sydney United from 1994 through to 1997.

Spearheaded by motor magnate Nick Politis, 'The Five White Knights' quickly targeted Culina for the difficult assignment of guiding the volatile and turbulent Olympic to further rare glory.

But it has not been easy for the 'Little Professor' in the first half of the draw.

Plagued by a multiple string of long injuries to three key players, Culina's side (before last weekend's round) had won eight, drawn three and lost six, they had also scored the third highest number of goals and were sitting just in the top six.

Whilst at United, Culina had piloted the League's most attractive side to three successive Top Six playoffs, winning a Minor Championship and in his last year lifting United into the Grand Final against Brisbane Strikers.

Under Culina Sydney United won the Johnnie Walker Cup Final plus two Waratah Cup finals.

That year Culina's League coaching colleagues saluted him by voting him the prestigious 'Coach Of The Year' award.

During Culina's reign at United, he had methodically and patiently blended Australia's most fluent and attractive squad in the league. They were magnificent to watch.

That all-conquering squad included high quality players of the calibre of Zeljko Kalac, Robbie Trajkovski, Velimir Kupresak, Richard Plesa, Tony Popovic, Mark Babic, Robbie Enes, Ante Moric, David Zdrilic and Ante Milicic.

Five of these players ended up in England or Europe on fulltime professional contracts, whilst nine gained selection in Australia's national squad.

Always ambitious, hungry to learn and highly self-motivated, Culina played for the Melbourne Knights, Sydney Croatia, Blacktown City, North Geelong and St Albans.

Whilst at St Albans, Culina won the 'Rothmans' Gold Medal' for an outstanding season.

In 1981 Culina was selected in one of Australia's national squads by the then manager, Rudi Gutendorf.



Yet in 1977 Culina was almost enticed to go to Holland and play.

Sparta Rotterdam scouts had sighted the young player and offered him a two-year contract, but due to family reasons Culina reluctantly refused the offer.

Born in Croatia, at the age of four, Branko migrated to Australia.

His first senior club was the Melbourne Knights in the Victorian State League.

As a goalscoring winger or midfielder, Culina made his debut in the NSL back in 1975 in a team that included star Billy Vojtek.

Five years later Culina was transferred to the NSW Champions Sydney Croatia where again he was surrounded by high quality players such as Steve Watson, Maurice Sullivan, Bruno Vidacic, Wally Savor, Peter Coleman, Marijan Kovacevic, Peter Mullen, etc.

In 1992 Culina won the Victorian Soccer Federation's prestigious award, "Victoria's Soccer Personality" for outstanding services and contributions he had made to Soccer in that State.

The challenging Culina maintains Olympic can still be a threat in the playoffs when the time comes around.

"It hasn't been easy at all. I've inherited players that I did not sign, we've been struck down by heavy injuries to key players early in the season unexpectedly, but we march on.

"Many of my players have not hit top form as yet.

"For example, much has been said and written about Brett Emerton. Let me tell you, yes, he's not playing to his full capacity or potential as yet. But he will soon hit top form.

"We have not seen the best of him. I'm patient and I've been trying to

tell him that he must realise what will be expected of him when he ultimately goes overseas.

"I've got another player that just recently has been offered a contract to play in Europe with a big club. He also must be patient for the time being.

"We've had problems with our defence, but since Mehmed Durakovic's arrival, many of these problems have been rectified I'm pleased to say.

"Mehmed's personal performance and attitude have done wonders for our younger players in front of him.

"He's a role model for any coach, as are people like Pablo Cardozo, George Bouhoutsos and Ante Juric.

"I think Sydney Olympic is a very good team in the making, but luck right now has not been going our way. But it will.

"It's a new team put together, and like anything new, time is required for a settling in period.

"At United when I was there many of the players knew each other for years. There was a family thing of togetherness which helped a lot.

When questioned on future stars for Australia, Culina unhesitatingly reeled off: "You must include Melbourne Knights' goalkeeper Joe Didulica, Sydney United's striker Mile Sterjovski, Carlton's Marco Bresciano and Simon Colosimo, Brisbane's Kasey Wehrman, and Olympic's Brett Emerton and Jason Culina.

As for the established players he names some of the Socceroos among his favourites.

"There are quite a few really. You cannot go past Mehmed Durakovic and Paul Trimboli.

"Here as well you must automatically think of guys such as Milan Ivanovic, Alex Tobin, Tony Popovic, Ante Milicic, Kresimir Marusic etc.

"All top players, but as well, fantastic people which is very important to me.

As for the Ericsson Cup, to be decided in just a few short months, he was adamant that the current champions have lost none of their cachet.

"South Melbourne. Ange Postecoglou has been doing a great job down there.

"Not only has he won the championship last season, but again is leading the League this season. After that you have a League where everyone of eight or nine teams could beat each other any day.

"Just look here. A few weeks ago one would say that either Perth Glory or Marconi would bolt in with the Championship.

"It's a toss up between as I say eight or nine teams the way I see it."

Olympic's coach was not afraid to comment on the League's standard of today as against say 10 years back.

"It (League) has lost a little in quality I would say.

"Today we have many young players that have come in too quickly, or early because of the great exodus of our players going overseas the past four or five years.

"We have lost too many big names.



Branko Culina: "Today's NSL players are far better equipped all-round."

"But in saying this, I honestly and firmly believe that today's players in the NSL are far better equipped all round in attacking and defensive duties."

Will Branko Culina managed to guide Olympic to the top of the League over the next dozen rounds?

Will he able to do a 'Mickey Hickman' and bolt home from nowhere. Only time will tell.

But with players such as Pablo Cardozo, Brett Emerton, Mark Brennan and Milan Blagojevic, this is a team to look for when the real test of character and quality comes ie. in the lead-up to the finals.

And the Little Professor Branko Culina will have his students fully prepared for battle — both mentally and physically — that you can bank on.

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2. Harry Redknapp My Autobiography	\$60
3. Premier League Players' Record 1946/1998	\$65
4. Studs Up Australia's only fanzine Jan 99 edition	\$3
5. Vinnie Jones' New Book	\$50
6. West Ham History	\$45
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Australian Features

BIG AL'S ABC OF SOCCER

With Alan Hunter

Big shoes they may be to fill, but I've been asked to provide this column in Les Murray's absence overseas.

Even though I've retired from playing after many years in the NSL, I am one of the lucky ones who still has an active involvement in the game through my commentary roles with the ABC and Optus Vision.

It's a great opportunity for me to be able to look at the game, the players and the coaches from a different perspective. We all have opinions on how a game should be played, but it's not always as easy as it may seem to sit in a commentary box and say something with live television — even for me!

I love football and, next to playing it, I love talking about it. TV is one way of doing that, and I hope you find this column informative and entertaining.

Soccer Expo

One of the things that pleased me during the week was to learn that the former Chairman of Soccer Australia, David Hill, is again involved in the game.

I know he's had more than his fair share of knockers, but I think his reign at the helm of the national body did a lot to bring soccer out from under the bushel in Australia.

It still may not be the case that every club has 10,000+ crowds, or that every club is on a sound financial position, but at least people know about the national soccer league and Australian teams more than they did five years ago.

The success of teams such as Northern Spirit and Perth Glory are tangible evidence that his vision is the way of the future.

His latest project involves the forthcoming Soccer Expo to be held at the new Olympic Stadium at Homebush Bay in Sydney in June this year.

Amongst other things, this will include exhibitions from players such as Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka, and coaching seminars from Terry Venables, and local experts such as Graham Arnold, Frank Farina and David Mitchell.

Australia v World XI

At the same time as the Soccer Expo will be the match to officially open the Olympic Stadium between Australia and a FIFA World XI.

I hope our national coaching team give some of our players involved in the 2000 Olympics an opportunity to be part of the squad for the game.

This would enable them to experience the big match atmosphere, gain exposure to some of Australia's senior players and some of the world's top players in the FIFA World XI as well as get to know the Stadium itself.

It's important that our Olympic squad really feels the turf before the rest of the world.

Even if they don't actually play, it will be a good experience for them and the ones who would really benefit from it include our Australian-based players such as Simon Colosimo, Brett Emerton and Kasey Wehman, all of whom I see as being key members of our Olympic team, together with other young overseas players such as Vince Grella and Nick Rizzo — not to mention Harry Kewell!

2000 Olympics squad

A certain Sydney journalist lambasted me in his newspaper recently because I expressed the opinion that the Australian team didn't play well against South Korea in the recent two-match series.

In fact, in the game I saw in the driving rain in Melbourne, they were awful! I'm sure Raul Blanco and Les Scheinflug would be the first to admit it, but there's only so much a coach can do.

What I said was that, for that game, South Korea was clearly the more professional and disciplined

side and I fully expect them to be one of the teams to make the Olympics competition. Because they are professional and disciplined, they will be a difficult team to beat.

The journalist felt obliged to point out that we had many of our first-choice players missing from the line-up and the weather conditions were abysmal.

The former is stating the obvious and the weather is something that both sides had to endure, not just one!

The 2000 Olympics is very important to Australian football.

Those of us who are steeped in football tradition and culture know that it's not the most important event in the football calendar, but most Australians are going to take notice of it because we're in the competition in what will be a mind-blowing event for the whole country, and it's on our own turf not just in Sydney, but also in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra.

It's imperative that we put our best feet forward for the Olympic football competition and, as a minimum, win a medal. It will bring us recognition and status both here and overseas.

I'm sure all Australians agree, though, that we should be doing all we can to ensure that our Olympic squad get the match practice and quality training time that it needs.

Around the traps

I'll get off my soapbox now, and in closing, just I share a bit of information you may not have picked up on.

Young Andy Vlahos, with whom I played at Carlton, has already picked up a contract with Greek giants, Panithinaikos.

Andy arrived in Athens to be told by the Panithinaikos manager that he would be given a playing contract straight away, because if the players



Big Al ... play some of the Olyroos when FIFA's World XI play us.

thought he trialling, he would be treated like the proverbial (was I'm sure there's a Greek word I could use for it).

So, instead of the week-long trial he expected, Andy was given a playing contract to sign at the airport and he was introduced as a fully fledged player for the big Greek side!

Andy's a great talent, and I hope we see him back in Oz sometime.

I get around to many games, so if you see me, please come and say hello. I'm always happy to meet supporters and have my ear chewed! I'm the one who Kojak copied with his hair-do!

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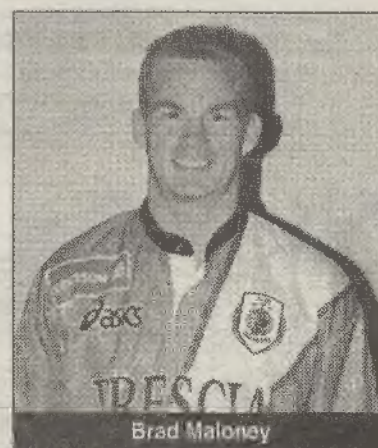
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Australian Features

KIWI WITH THE GLORY HEART



Welcome Amigos! We are The Four Diegos. Let's Samba, Let's Rumba, Let's La Bamba, Let's Salza down the Copacabana with sombreros on our head and ball at our feet.

Let's welcome Perth Glory's Kiwi international defender, Gavin Wilkinson.

Diegos: "The Four Diegos are always impressed with players wanting to look their best. We noticed with great interest, your new braided hairstyle against Carlton recently. Who inspired the new look? Was it your guitar strumming old foe, Marconi striker, Francis Awaritefe? Was it your teammate, John Markovski's unnatural attraction to Whoopi Goldberg? Or was it to impress your coach, Bernd Stange, who we all know, is a staunch Bob Marley fan?"

Wilkinson: "I know that Bernd is a Bob Marley fan so that had a little bit to do with it. But I was actually trying to look like former New Zealand international, Robbie Ironside. I failed because he's still twice as ugly as me."

Diegos: "You of course, earn your living playing soccer in Australia but recently you and your Kiwi mates, had the gall to bite the hand that feeds you by helping New Zealand beat the Socceroos for a spot in the lucrative Confederations Cup. Did you feel like giving your earnings back after the game, and what was it like beating the Socceroos?"

Wilkinson: "Normally if New Zealand beat the Socceroos, generally it's as a result of a bit of luck that's gone our way. The last time we beat Australia was 19 years ago but I felt, on this occasion, we deserved to win. It was good to win because when the Glory boys try and stir me up I now have the final

say. The only negative is that I think every Australian referee hates me now."

Diegos: "It looks certain that your Trans-Tasman soul brothers, the Auckland Kings, will be admitted into the Ericsson Cup next season. For you personally, will it be a case of blood being thicker than Swan lager, where you'll take it easy on them, when you play them or will you try to send them back home with their sheep tails between their legs?"

Wilkinson: "The aim is to send them home with their sheep's tails tucked firmly between their legs. I think whenever you play, you've got to play to win. When you play against people you know and played with all your life it's even more rewarding when you beat them because you've always

got that one thing over them. Anyway, I think the Swan lager over here is a lot better than the staunch New Zealand brew, Lion Red. There's no way that blood is thicker than Swan Lager."

Diegos: "The vociferous, colourful Glory fans, in the club's relatively short time in the league, have earned a great reputation, turning up in big numbers every week. Do you think Kiwi supporters back home will turn up to watch the Auckland Kings in similar numbers and who, in your opinion, would win a chanting competition between Glory supporters and Kiwi supporters?"

Wilkinson: "Last time we played against Australia in New Zealand we had a crowd of 23,000 people at a great venue. If the Auckland Kings can get half that number, and I firmly believe they can, they may well be able to get a bit of noise going. Having said that, I don't think anyone can outdo the Perth supporters. Northern Spirit have tried but they haven't been able to create the same atmosphere."

Diegos: "They say when you go to the movies with your Glory and Kiwi beanstalk teammate, Danny Hay, he makes you look so short that you can get in



Gavin Wilkinson ... "Northern Spirit have tried but they haven't been able to create the same atmosphere."

for half price. You and he have struck up a great understanding on the field. Is it because you play both club and international football together?"

Wilkinson: "We played club football in New Zealand together and have represented New Zealand exactly the same number of times. When he first came over to Perth he stayed with me for a year and I think over time we have developed a great understanding of one another. This has definitely helped on the playing field."

Diegos: "The club has been transformed into a real winning animal on the field this season. What do you think is the main reason for the success on the field thus far?"

Wilkinson: "I think it's the discipline we show throughout the week. With Bernd everything revolves around discipline. From the time training starts and throughout the duration of training, every player knows what he has to do. Through the week Bernd is always focused on the weekend. He works on our weaknesses and prepares the team for the specific opposition we are going to meet."

Diegos: "Have you a message for the fanatical Glory supporters out there in the stands?"

Wilkinson: "I think the alcohol consumption has dropped in the last couple of weeks because of the heat. If they can pick that up again maybe, they will be able to create more noise and drive us to even better performances."

Diegos: "Thanks Gavin. We hope you don't have a bad hair day. You might start looking more like Bob Geldof rather than Bob Marley. Adios Amigo!"

Wilkinson: "Thanks Diegos. No chance! I wash my hair and I do like Mondays, as long as we win, of course. Adios Amigos!"



Gavin Wilkinson (right) with another Glory hard-man, Gareth Naven.

NECK PAIN

By Dr Peter Mitrevski

Neck problems can result from an injury, poor posture, excess tension, wear and tear, or disease processes. One or more of these factors can cause neck pain and impaired movement.

INJURIES

Sport accounts for many neck injuries, especially among young people. In soccer, heading a powerfully struck soccer ball is a frequent cause.



Dr Mitrevski with Nigeria's Olympic team goalkeeper, Emmanuel Babayaro

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SPRAINS

When the neck is forced to move past its normal range of motion, the muscles and ligaments can stretch and tear. This is a sprain, similar to a sprained ankle.

This type of injury — popularly known as a 'whiplash' — most often happens in auto accidents.

POSTURE & EMOTIONAL STRESS

Posture has more to do with the neck than most people realise. The head and spine must balance in relation to the line of gravity. When poor posture — or obesity, weak stomach muscles, or prolonged sitting — pulls the curve of your lower back forward, the upper back curves further backward, forcing the neck to curve forward to compensate.

Emotional stress brought on by worrying about one's job, family, or holding back feelings of anger, sadness, or fear, can contract the neck muscles too. It can also aggravate neck injuries.

WEAR & TEAR

Just as hair greys and skin wrinkles, the cervical spine (neck) undergoes changes with age. Especially those areas that get the most movement, begin to show the effects of daily wear and tear, usually between ages 40 to 60.

As the disc wears it becomes narrower, less elastic and loses water content.

Gradually, it causes the vertebrae to get closer and to touch each other. The resulting irritation paves the way for the formation of bony spurs which can jut into the nerve canals and pinch a nerve.

WHAT TO DO

Your chiropractic doctor can best help you with your neck problem, if the cause of your neck pain is diagnosed and treated early.

Accurate diagnosis requires a complete medical history, physical examination and sometime, imaging studies like, X-rays, CT Scans or MRIs.

Management of neck problems may include:

- Medication / Rest / Soft tissue / massage
- Mobilisation / Manipulation
- Heat or ice application
- Ultrasound or interferential
- Home exercise programs / Stretching
- Postural training

Although your doctor can guide you on the road to recovery, a healthy, painfree neck is almost always up to you.

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NSW SUPER LEAGUE

BERTOOGNA CALLS FOR TIGERS' 'COMMITMENT'

By Aidan Ormond

On the eve of the Super League kick-off, former Socceroo defender, and Leichhardt Tigers coach, Arno Bertogna, made an impassioned plea for commitment from his players and Club in order to win the Super League.

At the club's pre-season launch last Friday night at the Apian Club, Bertogna made the pledge to fans and players alike that a commitment to success was needed to lift the club back to its glory days.

Speaking exclusively to Soccer Weekly later, the Tigers coach expressed his desire to win the league and his own commitment.

"We want to win but it's not about words, we have to commit to winning for ourselves and our team. Although we are touted as a 'glamour' club I don't look at it that way. We have to work hard every week, there's nothing glamorous about that."

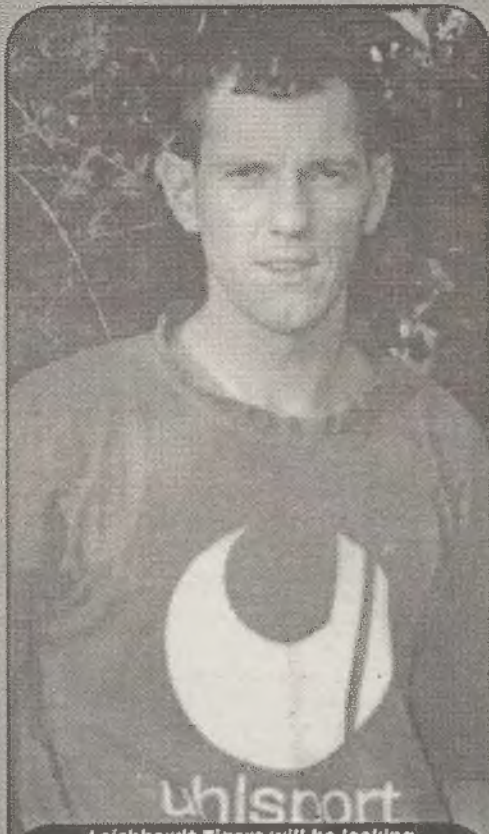
"We have had a good 11 week pre-season and these boys of mine really have worked hard. Now we just have to go and do it."

As for his own future, he is not looking at Ericsson Cup, preferring to concentrate on the present day challenge of winning the Super League and his own career outside of soccer.

Leichhardt Tigers have for this season ex-Marconi and Sydney Olympic midfielder Lou Hristodoulou (the man with the thunderous long distance shot). Other players to look out for are Mite Talceviski, Fabio Macolin and Tommy Bazdaric.

The evening, which featured a host of entertainment and dining, was also the opportunity for the club to welcome in their new sponsor, Barilla Pasta. The deal is expected to be worth \$150,000 over three years.

Club President Tony Raciti said later to Soccer Weekly that he was delighted to be associated with a company like Barilla, which is one of the

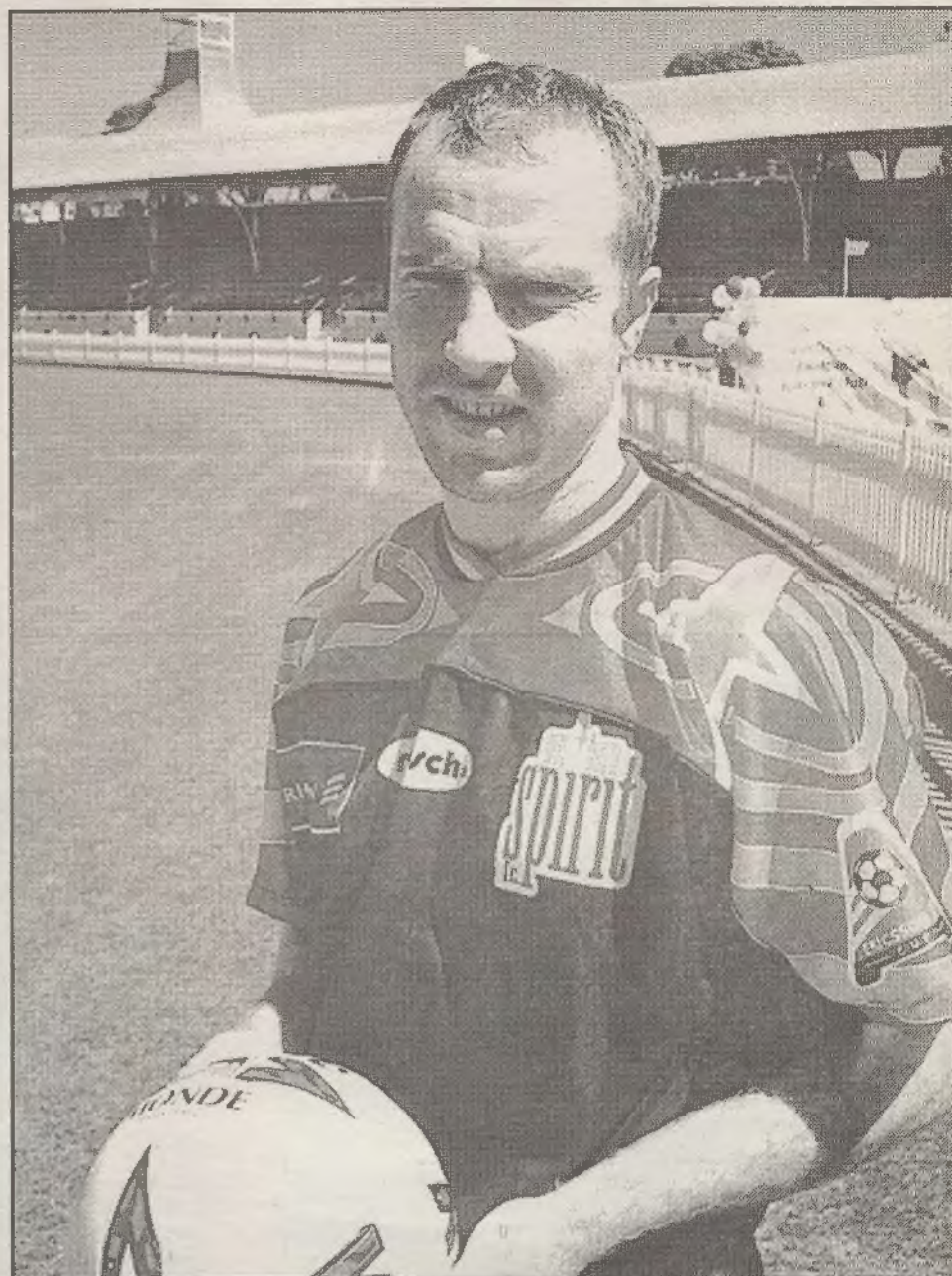


Leichhardt Tigers will be looking towards keeper Frank Mikuletic for as many clean sheets as possible this season.

world's leading pasta makers. The sponsorship will see the name Barilla on all Tigers' jerseys, from juniors up.

The announcement of this sponsorship was released last Thursday to the general media.

Leichhardt Tigers recently completed a junior tour of Fiji, playing against representative sides from our Pacific neighbours.



See Socceroo and Northern Spirit star Scott Ollerenshaw playing in Super League for Ryde City.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE Results

Round



One

BONNYRIGG EAGLES Gomez, Richardson	2	BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS Codmani, Adioski(4)	5
MARCARTHUR RAMS Whidett(2), McDonald(2)	4	CENTRAL COAST Byrne	1
BLACKTOWN CITY Smith, Bennett	2	EASTERN SUBURBS	0
RYDE CITY Kelly	1	FAIRFIELD BULLS Larocca, Borg, Hoenselaars	3
LEICHARDT TIGERS	0	PARRAMATTA EAGLES	0
CANTERBURY	1	SUTHERLAND SHARKS	1

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND



TWO

Saturday 13th February

Macarthur Rams vs Blacktown City Demons
Lynwood Park, 7:00pm
Sutherland Sharks vs Central Coast
Seymour Shaw Park, 7:00pm

Sunday 14th February

Bankstown City Lions vs Canterbury Marrickville
Jensen Park, 5:00pm
Parramatta Eagles vs Ryde City
Melita Stadium, 7:00pm
Eastern Suburbs vs Leichhardt Tigers
Wentworth Park, 5:00pm
Fairfield Bulls vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles
Nineveh Field, 6:00pm

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VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

GULLY SPOILS THE PARTY

GREEN GULLY 2 GREEN CAVALIERS 1

By Harry Georgiadis

South Dandenong returned to their home at George Andrew Reserve after spending one season at Ross Reserve, Springvale. Unfortunately, their 'homecoming' resulted in a disappointing 2-3 loss to Green Gully, one of the favourites for the championship.

It was an entertaining game with South Dandenong, having picked up quality players like Robert Runje and Nick van Egmond in the off season while the Cavaliers side was sprinkled with ex-Ericsson Cup players including Zoran Markovski and Steve Mangos.

The visitors took the lead after 10 minutes when Tony Neceski cut inside from the right and fired a shot from the edge of the penalty area which split off Chris Roche's chest, allowing Jan. Suric to loop a header back over the South Dandenong 'keeper.

The hosts then enjoyed their share of possession but their final pass was often poor.

All their good work was undone on the stroke of half time when Daniel Genovesi ran unchallenged from the centre circle to shoot across Roche to make it 2-0.

Donev replaced Neceski for the Cavaliers at half time who then went further ahead almost immediately.

Steve Douglas, unbeatable all day, broke up another attack and released Nick Papadopoulos, who ran half the length of the pitch before crossing for Genovesi to score his second.

South Dandenong player-coach Fadil Muriqi and in-sh striker Claran Feehan came off the bench at the home team instantly looked more dangerous.

Muriqi had one shot brilliantly saved and then, with only seven minutes to go, Feehan side-footed home a cross to reduce the deficit. Two minutes later Reshat Mezensof converted a penalty after Muriqi had been pushed inside the box to set up a grandstand finish.

A few final frantic South Dandenong attacks later, Green Gully were pleased to leave with a tight victory that for so long seemed comfortable.

South: Roche, Rasimi (Muriqi), Tarevski, Runje, Gurpinar, Moodie (Feehan), Memeti, Pelja, Van Egmond, Mezensof, Mucaj.

Cavaliers: Vella, Atanasovski, Dimitrelos, Douglas, Mangos, Markovski, Papadopoulos, Georgiadis, Genovesi, Suric, Neceski (Donev).

Referee: Rick Arturi

Votes: 3- Genovesi (GG), 2- Douglas (GG), 1- Runje (SD).

TSOLAKIS' PORT TRIUMPH

SPRINGVALE WHITE EAGLES 1 PT MELBOURNE 0

By Patrick Tomson

A hard fought tussle saw Port Melbourne edge out a ten man Springvale White Eagles side at the Serbian Sports Centre on Sunday.

The 42nd minute send-off of Springvale's Mariano Calomino sparked a string of scoring opportunities for both sides with Springvale unable to salvage any points from the game.

The first memorable moment of the game occurred in the 14th minute when Springvale's Eric Styczen turned superbly in midfield and slotted a through ball to Ninoslav Bezbradica whose timid shot was easily saved by Port's 'keeper Jamie Cooper.

A heavy challenge to Port's Tom Sonisim saw him stretched from the ground with substitute Nick Palamaras given the duties of sweeper.

Calomino was judged to be the last man when he handled Palamaras' lofted pass. Referee Andrew Stacey was left with no option but to send the defender off.

The Sharks resultant free kick lead to their goal scoring corner. A clever flick on by Peter Kakos found the head of Nick Tsaltas who made no mistake from close range.

An undermanned Springvale side came out firing in the second half and were presented with an excellent opportunity in the 54th minute. Styczen was felled just outside the penalty area and they called for a red card for the Sharks' Palamaras.

With the whole Port team behind the ball, Zlatko Mihajlovic's low drive narrowly missed the target.

Two minutes later, Springvale were to be rewarded for their efforts after Cooper's fisted clearance was superbly volleyed back into his net by Styczen.

In a bold move, Port's coach Peter Tsolakis brought on his remaining two substitutes and switched to a three man attack.

The tactical change paid dividends when in the 80th minute, Kakos' lay off found John Pappas, whose left foot shot rattled the back of the net for the winner.

White Eagles: Simic, Calomino (sent off), Culibrk, Nikolic, Mlinar, Gacovski (Mladenovic), Styczen, Bezbradica, Cohadzie (Marinkovic), Mihajlovic, Rikanovic (Mandic).

Sharks: Cooper, Vargas, Pappas, Heath, Tzirtis (Jackson), Caimakamis (Palatades), Latinopoulos, Kakos, Tsaltas, Sonisim (Palamaras), Knezevic.

Referee: Andrew Stacey

Votes: 3- Tsaltas (PM), 2- Styczen (SWE), 1- Pappas (PM).

Bentleigh Greens produced a boilover on Sunday evening when they overpowered a lethargic St Albans Saints 3-0 at Churchill Reserve, reports Daniella Raco.

St Albans began pressing early on but those hopes faded against an in-tune Greens lineup.

By the time Bentleigh scored their first goal, in the 11th minute through Stelios Drakos, the pattern of play was set.

Bentleigh had asserted its dominance and the Saints defence was unable to absorb it, letting a second goal slip mid-way through the first half.

A through ball found Juan Nilo who was able to shrug away a defender, turn, and slot the ball past Ivan Tomic in the Saints' goal.

Bentleigh continued to control proceedings by

maintaining the pressure into the second half with some sharp passing and good running on the ball.

For a few brief moments St Albans did, however, appear willing to take the game to their opponents. Early chances in the second half saw one long range snap-shot balloon well over the bar and a free kick smashing into the top of the post.

Solid play in midfield by the Saints' Damian Vojtek saw him set up minor chances for his team, however, his efforts to provide a life-line were to no avail.

St Albans did not look convincing in front of goal, they appeared tentative, constantly losing possession, hindering any genuine attempts to form a build-up in attack.

Frustrated with their efforts, St Albans were unable to cope with the challenge and Bentleigh continued to threaten at every opportunity.

The third goal came in the 75th minute by way of Tom Karapatsos in a one on one with Tomic.

Karapatsos was the victor, slotting the ball home to settle the match 3-0.

Saints: Tomic, Clarica, Vojtek, K.Razov, Raspudic, Colina, I.Razov, Dragicevic, Bacak (Basic), Movric (Vidakovic), S.Rados (Cuze).

Greens: Clarke, Karapatsos, Micheil, McDonagh, Constantinou, Drakos, Kourkoutzelos, Lenetis (Papettas), Pino (Kahmens), Nilo, Grela (Kotsovolos).

Referee: Senko Rastocic

Votes: 3- Nilo (BG), 2- Vojtek (SA), 1- Karapatsos (BG).

When Fawkner Blues and Melbourne Raiders pair up to do battle, you can always be assured that neither team will let up until the final whistle blows, reports George Koukeris.

The Blues started with Tamer Simsek and Chris Sterjovski up front with the intent to create damage. In the 10th minute this combination displayed its ruthlessness when Simsek delivered an accurate through ball for Sterjovski only requiring the Midas touch to finish off.

Raiders coach, Dusan Kalezic, sensing danger, called for an early substitution after Nick Cuculevski was sidelined from a heavy knock.

His replacement, George Jolevski, was somewhat questionable given the nagging groin injury the dual Gold Medalist has been carrying.

Eight minutes later, the Raiders bounced back with an impressive equaliser from Pino Corallo. David Iacovitti's run down the left flank exposed an opening for Corallo to finish with a cool deflection to the right of goal, leaving Maurice Gonzalez helpless.

In the second half, the elements of nature started to affect the course of the game and in due time, it showed in the proceedings of the match.

In the 59th minute, Iacovitti displayed his determination for the win with a controlled effort to pass four players and set up Corallo for an encounter with the 'keeper.

Corallo gave little away, striking with accuracy to give the Raiders the lead they were to hang on to.

Raiders: Manzeila, Boschini, Nedanovski, Anastasiou, Kitanovski, Angelovski, Iacovitti, Sifkas, Lingurovski (El Kersh), Corallo, Cuculevski (Jolevski, Gasparini).

Blues: Gonzalez, Tramontana, Grimaud, P Ferrante, Schipano, V.Ferrante, Bordignon, Simsek (Collins), Sterjovski (Murphy), Duzel, Di Sauro (Alexopoulos).

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

Votes: 3- Iacovitti (MR), 2- Corallo (MR), 1- Sifkas (MR).

EAST TRIUMPH IN ALTONA DERBY

ALTONA MAGIC 1 ALTONA EAST 2

By Milan Ninovic

Promoted Altona East continued their winning start to the year with a 2-1 victory over Altona Magic.

For Magic, who were defeated 5-0 last week by Bentleigh Greens, it was another disappointing performance in going down to their close rivals.

Altona East were well worth the three points and took the lead a quarter of an hour into the game.

The Magic defence failed to clear the loose ball and Peter Groidis swooped to fire his side into the lead.

Two minutes into first half stoppage time Magic had the chance to equalise from the penalty spot after East defender Giovanni De Amicis had brought down Henry Velkovski.

Zoran Petrevski's kick was weak and Altona East

'keeper John Chalamandaras had no difficulty saving it.

Six minutes into the second half Magic did equalise when Velkovski let go with a screamer from 25 metres that was too good for Chalamandaras.

Altona East got back in front just minutes later however, a quick counter-attack bringing the Magic undone.

Man-of-the-match Paul Donnelly took most of the credit for the goal, taking the ball some 50 metres before squaring it for George Angelos to shoot low into the corner of the net.

Magic: McGrath, Cergovski, Tasevski, Bizimovski (S.Markovski), Micevski, T.Markovski, Nedza, Ashton, Velkovski, Petrevski, Sapazovski.

East: Chalamandaras, R.Antoniadis, Salpingidis, Kapulica, De Amicis, Donnelly, Xydias, Groidis (Malliaras), Bartol, T.Antoniadis (Polykandritis), Angelos (Verikakis).

Referee: Jim Oulians

Votes: 3- Donnelly (AE), 2- T.Markovski (AM), 1- Kapulica (AE).

STOJILKOVSKI GEORGIES' STAR

SUNSHINE GEORGIES 2

PRESTON LIONS 1

By John Rigas

A young and spirited Sunshine Georgies outfit frustrated an experienced Preston Lions team to score a 2-1 victory in an action-packed encounter at Chaplin Reserve.

The visitors had more possession and created more chances in the opening 20 minutes. Long range efforts from Ivan Filipovski and captain Chris Emovski tested Sunshine goalkeeper Steve Wardle.

Preston had striker Tony Ugunovski sent off in the 34th minute, allegedly for elbowing youngster Louie Rozanitis.

Darko Stojilkovski opened the scoring three minutes later when he latched on to a floated cross by Anthony Cassar to comfortably shoot past Preston 'keeper Chris Tenuta.

On the stroke of half time, a long range free kick by Filipovski was blocked by Wardle, Lions striker Warren Spink followed through to force Wardle into another magnificent save.

Preston were on level terms in the 57th minute when substitute and former Sunshine hero Sash Markovski powered his shot past Wardle through a packed penalty area.

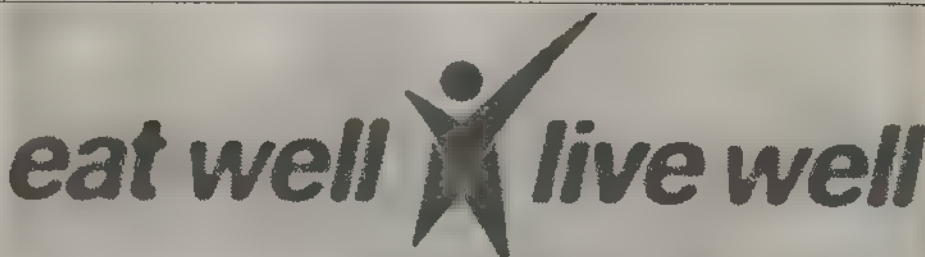
Sunshine goal hero Stojilkovski scored the winner in the 71st minute when he lobbed Tenuta in the Preston goal to take his tally for the season to three.

Georgies: Wardle, Vera, Elvin (Scicluna), Bot, Debono, Rozanitis, Recchia (Monitto), Kindtner, Hermosilla, Cassar (P.Markovski), Stojilkovski.

Lions: Tenuta, Slavevski, Kovacic (Smirnis), Lisolajski, Filipovski, Ognenovski, Ugunovski (sent off), Katouik (Stojcevski), Spink, Burlak (S.Markovski), Emovski.

Referee: Robert Caminiti

Votes: 3- Stojilkovski (SG), 2- Hermosilla (SG), 1- Filipovski (PL).



EAT WELL LIVE WELL PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

ROUND 1 DETAILS (MONDAY NIGHT GAMES)

Green Gully Cavaliers 1 (Atanasovski) - Melbourne Raiders 1 (Iacovitti)

Cavaliers: Vella, Atanasovski, Dimitrelos, Douglas, Mangos, Svigos (Neceski), Papadopoulos, Georgiadis, Genovesi, Donev (Suric), Markovski.

Raiders: Manzeila, Boschini, Nedanovski, Anastasiou, Kitanovski, Angelovski (Lingurovski), Iacovitti, Sifkas, Jolevski, Corallo (Gasparini), Cuculevski (QG).

Votes: 3- Sifkas (MR), 2- Kitanovski (MR), 1- Markovski (QG).

Bulleen Inter Kings 0 South Dandenong 0

Kings: Keogh, Valentic, Stojcevski, Everetts (Guglielmi), Della Rocca, Mazzini, Babic, Waddell, Gnjudic, Sherifovski (sent off), Grbac.

South: Roche, Rasimi, Tarevski, Runje, Gurpinar, Moodie, Memeti, Van Egmond (Zekirija), Feehan (Muriqi), Mezensof, Mucaj.

Votes: 3- Gurpinar (SD), 2- Stojcevski (BK), 1- Moodie (SD).

ROUND 2

Altona Magic 1 Altona East 2

South Dandenong 2 Green Gully Cavaliers 3

Springvale White Eagles 1 Port Melbourne Sharks 2

Sunshine Georgies 2 Preston Lions 1

St Albans Saints 0 Bentleigh Greens 3

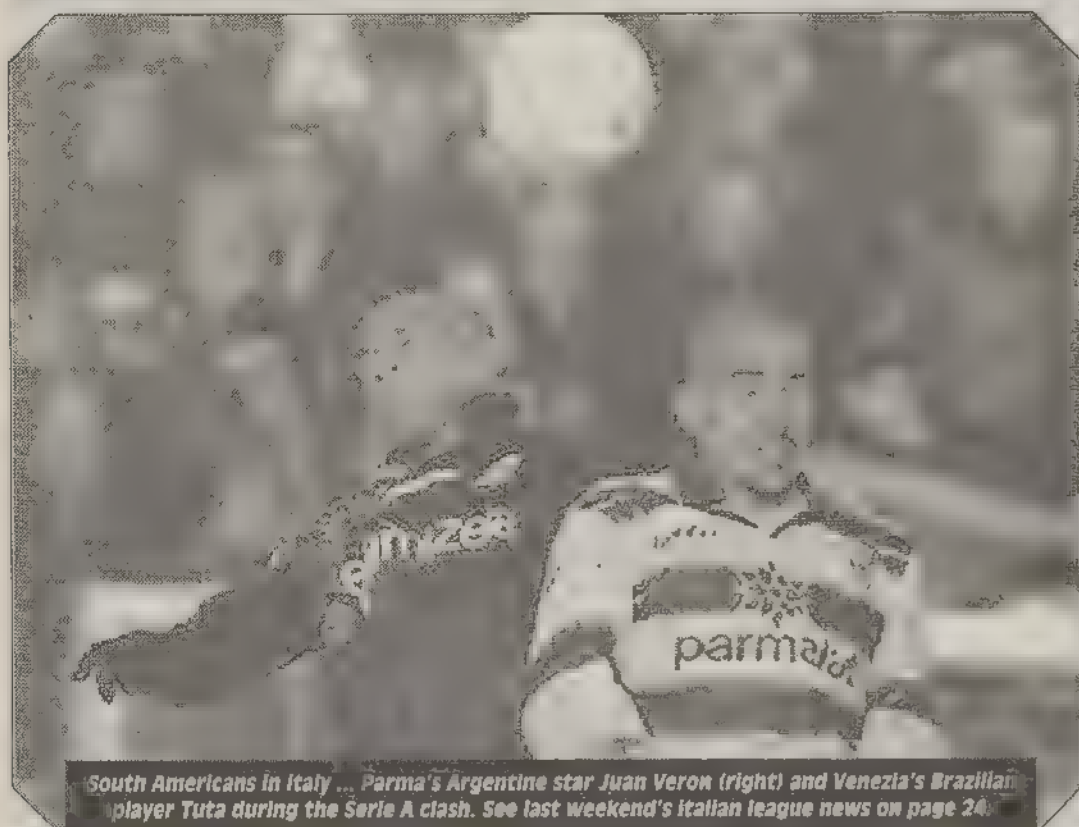
Melbourne Raiders 2 Fawkner Blues 1

ROUND 3 FIXTURES

Sunday February 14

Fawkner Blues v Green Gully Cavaliers - kick off 6pm - Smith Reserve
Bentleigh Greens v Melbourne Raiders - kick off 6pm - Kingston Heath Reserve
Altona East v St Albans Saints - kick off 6pm - Paisley Park
Preston Lions v Altona Magic - kick off 6pm - Goodyear Stadium
Port Melbourne Sharks v Sunshine Georgies - kick off 6pm - Anderson Reserve
Monday February 15
Bulleen Inter Kings v Springvale White Eagles - kick off 8.15pm - Veneto Club
Westvale v South Dandenong - kick off 8.15pm - Green Gully Reserve

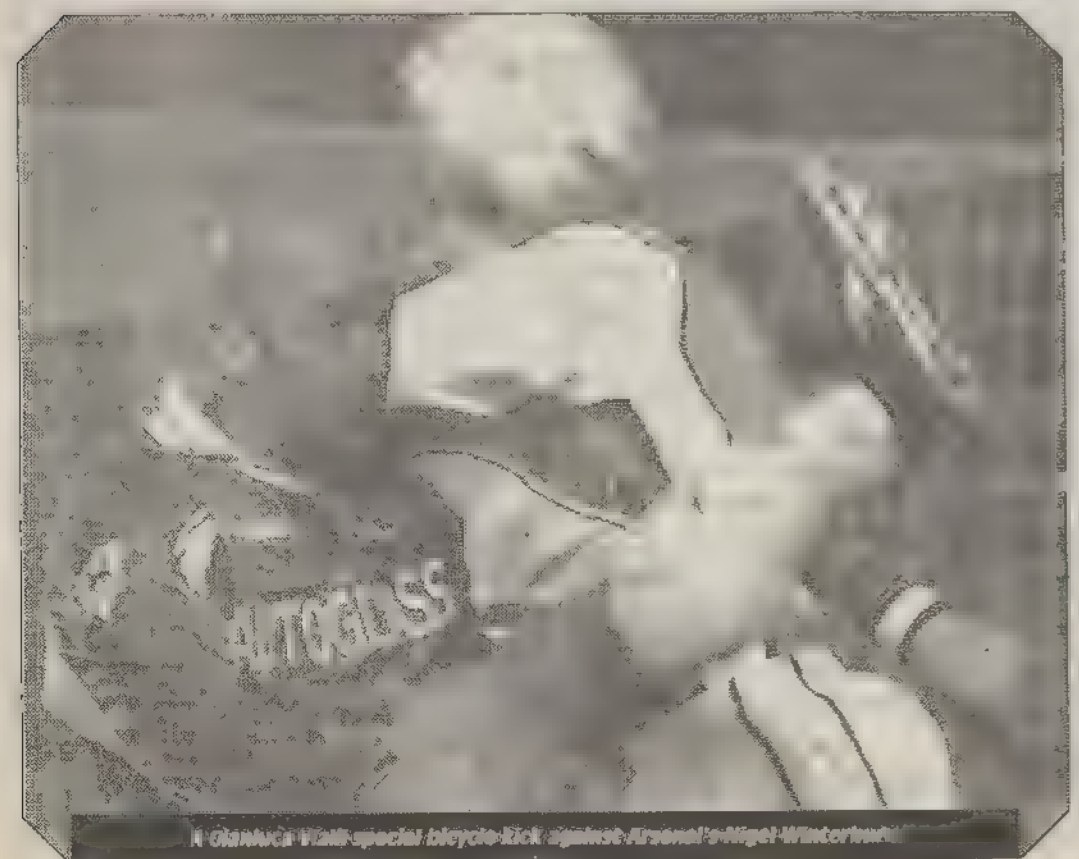
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South Americans in Italy ... Parma's Argentine star Juan Veron (right) and Venezia's Brazilian player Tuta during the Serie A clash. See last weekend's Italian league news on page 24.



Glenn Hoddle's special bicycle kick against Arsenal's Nigel Winterburn.



Glenn Hoddle's special bicycle kick against Arsenal's Nigel Winterburn.



Gunners in Arms ... Bergy and Winterburn after the Dutchman's goal against Chelsea. Read Craig Wilson from London in the UK pages starting on 27.



Mexican action between Pumas and Aiz. Fourteen players were red-carded in the reconc round. Details on the Americas page on 24.

AMERICAS

THE CRAZY WORLD OF SOUTH AMERICAN CLUB SOCCER

Fourteen players were sent off in a recent round of the Mexican championship, while in Brazil, the only South American country where the new season has begun, the Carioca (Rio de Janeiro) championship started with a team failing to turn up for a game!

Mexico

Fourteen players were sent off in eight games on an explosive day in the Verano (Summer) championship, the second of the two championships in the season.

Five players, including Mexican international Luis Hernandez, were dismissed as UNL, better known as Tigres, beat eight-man Morelia 3-2 away.

Hernandez had already scored twice for UNL before his 53rd red card. The other players to go were Fabian Pena of UNL and Bustos, Dario Franco and Jesus Gomez of Morelia.

Santos Laguna were another team to finish with nine players after having two dismissed in their 3-1 defeat by America, who leads Group 2.

Toluca, famous for its shirtless band of supporters, is doing well in Group 4 after beating Necaxa, which won this year's Invierno (Winter) championship in December.

The 18 teams play each other once but are divided into four groups with eight sides going into the knockout stage.

Brazil

The Carioca (Rio de Janeiro state) championship began this year where it left off last, with a team failing to turn up for a game.

America-Rio de Janeiro failed to appear for its preliminary stage match away to Volta Redonda, claiming it should be among the eight clubs that

qualify directly for the first stage proper.

The referee waited half an hour before calling off the match and Volta Redonda, which had not expected their opponents to arrive, then played a training game against another team.

The Rio federation is expected to award a walkover victory to Volta Redonda when they receive the referee's report.

BRAZIL'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS NO WORRIES FOR WORLD CUP BID

The head of the Brazilian soccer federation has insisted that his country's economic crisis would not affect its bid for the 2006 World Cup.

He hinted, though, that Brazil may be happy to wait until 2010 provided FIFA's system of rotation is maintained and South Africa wins the vote for 2006.

"The economic situation is happening now but I'm sure we can still put on the World Cup," said Brazilian F.A. president Ricardo Teixeira. "Everyone wants it."

Teixeira, a member of the FIFA executive committee that will decide in March next year where the World Cup is held, said Brazil's low-

key campaign would gather steam once the recently issued FIFA guidelines on World Cup requirements had been digested.

He said Brazil, which has not hosted the World Cup for 49 years, deserved to be chosen: "In 2006 we will have gone 56 years without it. England held it in 1966, Germany in 1974. Plus we have won it four times so we have every right to stage it."

Teixeira, speaking from FIFA headquarters in Zurich where he was attending a meeting of the FIFA referees' committee, added, however: "If the rotation system runs logically, the tournament should go to Africa, then to South America."

Last year's championship ended in a succession of similar incidents involving the major sides as they squabbled over match venues, kick-off times and the order in which games should be played.

The Carioca is one of the numerous championships held in the first half of the Brazilian season.

Former Brazil coach Mario Zagallo kept his perfect record with Portuguesa as they beat Itano 3-1 in the first stage of the Paulista (Sao Paulo state championship).

In both Rio and Sao Paulo, the big clubs (Vasco da Gama, Flamengo, Fluminense and Botafogo from Rio, Sao Paulo, Santos, Palmeiras and Corinthians from Sao Paulo) are exempt from the first stages and play instead in the season-opening Rio-Sao Paulo tournament.

Costa Rica

An injury-time goal by Gerald Drummond kept Saprissa on top of the Clausura, the second of two championships held in the season.

They were one point ahead of newly-promoted Limonense after five games.

The national team is scheduled to play a friendly against Jamaica (details below).

BRAZIL TO PLAY 'WEAK' SOCCEROOS, ACCORDING TO FORMER GREAT TOSTAO

Former international Tostao has claimed the Brazilian national team had been turned into a purely money-making concern.

"In truth, the national team has lost its mystique and fascination to become merely a profitable business," Tostao wrote in his column in the Jornal do Brasil daily newspaper.

In doing so, he added his name to the long list of those who criticise the way the Brazil team is run.

Tostao, who played alongside Pele in Brazil's legendary 1970 World Cup team, said the 17 friendly internationals planned for this year were too many and some of the opponents were not testing enough for the World Cup runners-up.

"In November, Brazil will play two games in Australia, against the weak national team, at a decisive moment of the Brazilian championship," he said.

"These dates are so absurd that I suppose the under-20 team will be fielded as the clubs will rightly not want to their players to be present."

"In addition, the same problems of the Zagallo era will continue: arguments over the release of players and agreements so that not more than two players per club are selected," he said, referring to former coach Mario Zagallo who was sacked last year after the World Cup.

"We will play two or three times against the strong Dutch, but we will play mainly against weak teams such as Australia, Tunisia, Japan etc," complained Tostao, a qualified doctor who abandoned

his career because of an eye injury.

National team coach Wanderley Luxemburgo announced the national team's schedule for this year.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) is frequently under fire for the way it manages the national team program.

Critics say many games are badly timed, clashing with important club fixtures and leading to tug-of-wars with both Brazilian and European clubs over the release of top players.

Since taking over in August, Luxemburgo has enjoyed three games in charge.

The first, at home to Yugoslavia, lost credibility because of controversial refereeing by a local official. The other two were against below-strength Ecuador and a second-string Russian side.

In recent years, Brazil has played home matches against such unlikely opponents as Slovakia, Iceland, Honduras, Wales, Lithuania and Bosnia. Its final warm-up before last year's World Cup was a surreal affair against Andorra in a rundown Paris suburb.

The Caribbean Cup football competition, under new sponsorship from Inter Forever Sports, starts with a preliminary qualifier between Martinique and French Guiana at the Dillom Stadium.

This is the first leg of a home and away fixture — the second leg in French Guiana on February 20 —



Jamaica celebrate a goal in the World Cup. They are playing Costa Rica tomorrow night (Wed).

which will provide a fourth team for the Group 3 qualifying competition in April.

The Group 3 matches from April 17-21 in St Vincent and the Grenadines, will feature the hosts, St Kitts/Nevis, St Lucia, and the winner of the Martinique/French Guiana play-off.

The Caribbean Cup is now a biennial tournament with Inter Forever putting up a total US\$2.2 million for the next four competitions — US\$500,000 for each year 1999 and 2001, and US\$600,000 for 2003 and 2005.

The champion team will collect US\$100,000, up from US\$30,000 in previous years.

Martinique, whose record in the Caribbean Cup is bettered only by Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, are favoured to get past French Guiana and advance to the group competition.

Martinique were champions in 1993 when they beat Jamaica (6-5) on penalties in the final in Kingston, and they also qualified for the 1990 and 1994 finals.

They have failed only twice — in the 10 years of Caribbean Cup football — to get to the final round.

French Guiana made only one appearance in the final round, 1995 in the Cayman Islands where they lost all three matches.

In forthcoming preliminary matches, Bahamas will host Turks and Caicos Islands, and US Virgin Islands from February 24-26 to get into Group 1 competition with Bermuda and the Cayman Islands from May 7-9.

Barbados will face Guyana in a home and away fixture February 28 and March 6 for a spot in Group 2 with Guadeloupe, Antigua/Barbuda and Dominica from March 10-14.

Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands are listed to face each other later this week Friday and Sunday, for a Group 4 position against Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico March 17-21.

Competition in Group 5 is already set — Grenada, entertaining Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles from May 4-6.

JAMAICA V COSTA RICA

Experience and youth make up the Costa Rican squad which will face Jamaica tomorrow night in a friendly encounter at the National Stadium, reports the Jamaica Observer.

The Cost Ricans have been training since December 12 under new coach, Francisco Maturana of Colombia. Erick Lonnis captains the Costa Rican side which includes veteran World Cup player, Roy Meyer.

Other members of the squad are Lester Morgan, Harold Wallace, Jervis Drummond, Victor Cordero, Randall Rowe, Austin Berry, Sandro Alfaro, Jeaustin Campos, Douglas

Sequeira, David Diach, Johnny Murillo, Wilmer Lopez, Gerald Drummond, Walter Centeno, Jafet Soto, Reinaldo Parks, Rolando Fonseca and Mauricio Solis.

The Central Americans have the option to carry two other players for the match including top striker, Paulo Wanchope who plays in the English Premiership with Derby County.

Most of the Costa Rican players with "English" names have a Jamaican background as they are descendants of Jamaicans who migrated to the Central American country at the beginning of the century. Most speak English with a distinct Jamaican accent.

GREECE

BRAZILIAN SIGNS FOR PAO, IVIC FOR PANATHINAIKOS?

Cesar comes to Greece

Former Brazilian international Julio Cesar, from Borussia Dortmund, has signed with PAO.

Cesar's signing is a major boost for the club as he has played in some of the best leagues around Europe and has enjoyed tremendous success with Brazil in the World Cup as well as hoisting the European Cup aloft when Dortmund won the trophy three years ago.

The contract reportedly calls for 70 million drx., and he will most likely wear the number 6 on his back, the old number of Thanasis Kotsiadakis.

Ivic to move abroad?

With Dusan Bajevic making it clear that veteran striker Ilija Ivic does not figure in his long term plans, the great striker continues to bang them in week after week and has attracted attention of clubs both domestically and abroad.

French Champions Lens FC is the newest club to reportedly be interested in Ivic but the most tantalising prospect remains seeing Ivic in a green shirt of bitter rivals Panathinaikos next season.

Panionios still cash light

Panionios is still experiencing the problem of shortage of funds that appeared just before Christmas and has led to team practice sessions being disrupted as players refuse to attend till the issue concerning contract payments is sorted out.

Although long overdue player payments were made in time for Christmas there has been precious little more money forthcoming, notwithstanding the fact that two new Englishmen have been added to the players roster since then.

Preparations for the quarter final match in the Cup Winners Cup against Lazio are proceeding but club sources have indicated that the money from the ticket sales to Lazio has already been spent and with very little hope of making Europe next season, things can only get worse.

Panionios is already out of the Greek Cup competition and it is unlikely they will win the Cup Winners' Cup. As far as UEFA Cup action, the team is currently in 11th place in the Greek Championship.

AEK looking at Cameroon star

AEK reportedly wants to sign Cameroon international Patrick N'Boma, but they are awaiting an answer from his current team, Cagliari of the Italian Serie A who have been offered 400 million drx. (\$2.5 million) for the player.

With the winter transfer window about to close in Italy, AEK are looking for a quick answer with the player happy to take home a reported 180 million (\$1 million) over the next three years.

Olympiakos on standby with

Martin Fambous

Olympiakos is still trying to sign more players before the deadline, and the latest on the block is Slovakian player Martin Fambous.

Fambous is 23 years old and has been playing with Trencin in the Slovakian Championship.

He also plays for the Slovakian national team and he scored 16 goals in 30 games for his club team last season and put in 11 goals in 14 games the year before.

Roma is also rumoured to be interested in the Bratislava native, who played his first international game last April against South Korea.

No friendly in the offing

Borussia Dortmund contacted Olympiakos in the hope of setting up a friendly match between the two teams for February 10, but the Greek Champions had to decline the invitation because of a Greek Cup quarter-final tie with Xanthi the next day.

Ajax Amsterdam and Congo have also tried to schedule a friendly match with Olympiakos, but things have not worked out with either.

Looks like domestic fare is the only thing Red fans will enjoy till Juventus comes to town.

Nalitzis makes move from Panionios to

Ethnikos Asteras

Dimitris Nalitzis, a 22-year-old forward who has been with Panionios all season, will be moving to Ethnikos Asteras.

Panionios was wary of letting him go, but decided to cash in as they had plenty of offers as Panelefsiniakos, Veria, Proodeftiki and Xanthi were all interested in the player.

Panionios is already trying to fill the empty spot, and AEK's 28-year old Paris Zouboulis is said to be the marked man.

Mellisaniadis happy for a change

AEK boss Dimitris Mellisaniadis thinks his seven new signings can help his team get back into the Champions League and win the Greek Championship.

With Greece rated as having one of the top eight leagues in Europe, AEK needs only to finish in second place to secure a spot in the qualifying round of the European Cup.

Mellisaniadis wanted to remind the AEK supporters that seven is a lucky number, and his team made seven new signings. But even more important is that most of the new players are still quite young, meaning they will be able to help AEK for many years to come.

One of the biggest of the new signings, Christopher Wreh, arrived in Greece on Tuesday with his wife and son. The French-Liberian forward said he was very happy to be with a team such as AEK, where his cousin Kelvin Sebbwe also plays.

Forgotten Man

With all the new signings it is AEK's Arnar Gretarsson that has so far been forgotten. But Mellisaniadis said he has told Gretarsson that they will work out a new contract soon.

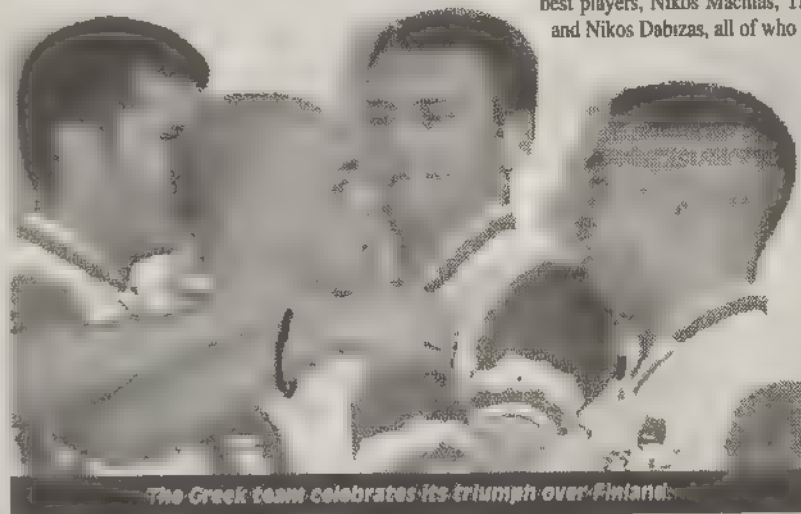
AEK will reportedly sign a new five-year contract with Kappa, the sporting goods company that currently sponsors the team uniforms. A deal with Bridgestone and Firestone is also in the works, but it looks like the front of the AEK jersey will remain with just the black and yellow colors of the team, at least for now.

AEK finally makes the most out of winter signing period

With most of this winter's press coming out of Nea Philadelphia about Paolo Di Canio and his subsequent signing with England's West Ham United, AEK supporters may be happy to learn their team did come through with some new players.

Alberto Mendez, a 24-year-old midfielder is from Arsenal on loan.

But AEK did manage some long-term contracts, start-



ing with Branko Milovanovic, a 26-year-old midfielder, who signed on for three years and 25-year old Australian Alvin Cecchi (from Wollongong Wolves) who (apparently) put pen to paper for four-and-a-half years to help out the defence.

AEK also picked up three Greek players, including 26-year-old defender Michalis Kapsis, who played in the 2-0 win over Olympiakos, and 19-year-old midfielders Giorgos Kavazis and Giorgos Trichias. Kapsis and Trichias each signed on for five years while Kavazis inked for four-and-a-half years.

Elias Atmatsidis and Toni Savevski each renewed their contracts with AEK. Atmatsidis re-upped for three years while Savevski signed on for another two.

On the International Front

National Team coach Angel Iordanescu was quite happy with the way his team played on Wednesday against Finland and on Friday against Belgium.

Iordanescu said he wasn't interested in the result, but added that a win is always a win. He said the point of the friendly was to make some changes and try out some new faces.

The friendly international match between Greece and Spain, which was slated for May 5, has been called off. Apparently Greece did not reply quickly enough and Spain has booked another game to fill the date.

Argentina however have indicated their willingness to play in Greece and a mini four team tournament may be organised for the end of the season.

Georgatos, Nikolaidis lead Greece over Finland, 2-1

Grigoris Georgatos scored an amazing goal from a free kick and Demis Nikolaidis added a strike from the penalty spot as Greece came back to top Finland, 2-1, in the Cyprus International Football Tournament on Wednesday.

Finland was able to score the first goal of the game in the 63rd minute, but after Nikolaidis equalized in the 68th minute, the game came down to Georgatos' golden foot in the 88th minute.

Georgatos had been taking most of the free kicks in the game with great accuracy but without reaping any benefits. That all changed as he stood ready to take a direct free kick from near the right corner of the field.

Finland sent only two men to build a wall in front of the Olympiakos midfielder, thinking the angle was too tough. But Georgatos wound up his left foot and blasted a high curling ball to the far corner. The Finnish goalkeeper jumped high for the ball but it easily went over his head and bounced off the far post behind finding the back of the net.

Nikolaidis was able to write his name on the score-sheet after a Finnish defender was whistled for handling the ball in the area. Yiannis Goumas was chasing the

ball in the area when a high bounce caught the Finn off guard. He tried to chest the ball at the last minute, but the ball bounced off his bicep, all in view of the Cypriot referee, Kostas Kapitanis.

Nikolaidis, the team captain, then lined for the spot kick and made no mistake as he rocketed his shot into the top left corner of the net. Viander had no chance at the ball, diving in the opposite direction.

The win gave Greece the right to play for the mini-tournament's title on Friday against the winner of the Cyprus-Belgium game (subsequently it was Belgium).

Greece, however, was playing without three of its best players, Nikos Machlas, Theodoros Zagorakis and Nikos Dabizas, all of who play abroad.

Greece controlled the tempo of the game and had almost all the chances. The one real chance for Finland was the one they scored on. Some deft passing and a beautiful chest ball just outside the area led to the shot coming in from the right side. It was the only time in the game Greek goal-

keeper Elias Atmatsidis was tested in the game, and the ball bounced off him and into the net.

The first half went by without much of a threat from either team, despite Greece having the majority of the possession. But in the 50th minute Dimitris Markos set up Nikos Limberopoulos in front, but the header was wide right.

GREECE: Atmatsidis (gk); Mavrogenidis; Fissas (P. Konstantinidis, 70); Anatolakis; Goumas; Poursanidis; Markos (Giannakopoulos, 62); Georgatos; Zikos; Limberopoulos (S. Konstantinidis, 85); Nikolaidis (c).

Greece hoists its first Cup trophy

With Friday's 1-0 win over Belgium from a fantastic goal by Stylianos Giannakopoulos, the Greek national team won its first international trophy at the Cyprus International Football Tournament.

When it came time for the Greek team to be presented with the trophy, captain Yiannis Kalitzakis passed up the honor in favor of Nikolaidis. Nikolaidis, Kalitzakis' AEK teammate, is the usual captain of the national team but did not start in Friday's match.

Nikolaidis received the trophy and raised it toward the night sky of Larnaca in front of 500 Greek soldiers and many more Cypriots who were at the match.

The win was important for Greece, even though the tournament was friendly and means nothing internationally. But Greece is hoping to be able to qualify for the European 2000 Championship after failing to reach the 1998 World Cup in France on the last day of qualifying when they drew 0-0 with Denmark in Athens.

Belgium, however, did qualify for France's World Cup last summer, and that makes beating them all the more satisfying.

Greece's play wasn't all that great throughout the first half and into the second half, but head coach Angel Iordanescu made many changes from a usual starting 11. In the 62nd minute, however, Georgatos and Nikolaidis came on as substitutes and everything changed for Greece.

They still managed just the one goal, the one the Giannakopoulos scored by deflecting in a shot off a defender's foot, but the flow was quick and strong for the Greeks.

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● 1st Floor, 2-6 Regent St, KOGARAH

Tel: (02) 9522 6288

Fax: (02) 9660 7349

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Tel: (02) 9386 0222

Fax: (02) 9660 7349

FEBRUARY 8

Panionios v AEK

Apollon v Olympiakos

RESULTS

Ionikos	.....0	PAOK	.....0
Aris	.....1	Ethnikos Ast.	.....0
Panelfsinjakos	..0	Xanthi	.....0
Kavala	.....0	Proodeftiki	.....1
Veria	.....0	Iraklis	.....2
PAO	.....2	Panellakos	.....1
OFI	.....3	Ethnikos	.....1

ASIA

AFC CENTURY CLUB INDUCTEES

Eol Ki-hyeon scored in the 46th minute and South Korea beat Iran 2-0 Friday night to advance to the final of the eight-nation Dunhill Cup.

South Korea had three clear chances in a six-minute period of the first half but could not finish. Ali Baghmisheh put the ball into the net in the 32nd minute for Iran, but it was called back for a handball after discussions among the officials.

Eol scored the game-winner on a shot into the low corner from 16 meters, and Lee Dong Gook got his fourth goal in four matches nine minutes later to provide some insurance.

Zhang Yuning scored two goals for China against the Vietnamese, who looked tired and were outplayed throughout despite a vocal crowd packing the 21,000-capacity Thong Nhat Stadium.

Zhang, unmarked in the box, scored on a corner kick in the 13th minute. Wang Peng made it 2-0 two minutes later on a long pass, and it stayed that way for the rest of the half.

Wang Yong added China's third goal in the 64th minute, and Zhang had his second goal of the night — and seventh in four matches — in the 76th minute.

Le Huynh Duc got a consolation goal one minute into injury time. Most of the crowd left long before the second match was over.

Read Soccer Weekly next week for details of the final between China and South Korea.

Asian Football Confederation chiefs, threatening to boycott the 2002 World Cup finals, on Friday held a crisis meeting with Sepp Blatter, president of football's international governing body.

Leading Asian officials underlined to Blatter their complaints regarding Asia's representation for the tournament.

Asian nations are outraged because FIFA gave just four places to the continent for the 2002 finals — but two automatically go to the co-hosts, Japan and South Korea.

Asian Football Confederation general secretary Peter Velappan has foreshadowed a boycott, asking for a resolution of the row before April.

Velappan, FIFA vice-president Dr. Chung Mong Joon of South Korea, executive committee members Abdullah Al-Dabal of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Bin Hamman of Qatar and Worawi Makudi of Thailand, along with AFC vice-president Fernando Manlalai of Sri Lanka pressed the Asian case.

A FIFA statement said that Blatter, FIFA senior-vice president Julio Grondona of Argentina and general-secretary Michael Zen Ruffinen heard the Asian demands for increased representation.

"The president took note and promised to take up the matter with the executive committee at its forthcoming meeting on March 11-12," said a spokesman.

Blatter had previously tried to head off the Asian threat by offering an extra place for the 2006 finals.

Asia had three guaranteed representatives at France '98. South Korea, Japan and Saudi Arabia qualified directly while Iran defeated Australia in a playoff.

None of the Asian teams made it past the first round.

Eight Malaysians are among fourteen players to be inducted into the AFC Century Club at a ceremony in Kuala Lumpur February 11.

The eight are Soh Chin Aun, Mokhtar Dahari, R Arumugam, Santokh Singh, Dato' Jamal Nasir, Shukor Salleh, Ahmad Yusof and Zainal Abidin Hassan.

The others members of the Century Club, recently established by the AFC to honour players who have featured in 100 or more international matches for their country are, Majed Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Choi Soon Ho of South Korea, Wali Suliman Al Habashi of Kuwait and Hamoud Sultan Madkhooor of Bahrain.

Both Mokhtar and Arumugam who passed away in 1991 and 1988 respectively will be represented at the ceremony by their spouses.

Present at the dinner ceremony will be AFC President

Sultan Ahmad Shah, Executive and Standing Committee members of the AFC and those from the local football fraternity.

The fourteen players were selected based on documentation presented by the national associations.

AFC General Secretary Date Peter Velappan said that recognition should be given to those players who have 100 or more caps in international competitions and for this reason the Century Club was established.

"These are players who have achieved a significant milestone in their playing careers. Some might have retired or even passed away but their service to Asian football needs to be recorded and honoured."

"The induction of players into the Century Club is an ongoing process and we have other names whose playing record is currently being scrutinised. If these players meet the criteria, we will induct them next year," he added.

Of the fourteen players being recognised by the AFC, four are members of the FIFA Century Club. They are Majed Abdullah (147 caps), Choi Soon Ho (113 caps), Masami Ihara (118 caps) and Wali Suliman (109 caps).

According to Date Peter Velappan, the AFC will liaise with FIFA to have the others also included in the international body's Century Club.

For the record, H. Arumugam has 192 caps to his credit with Santokh Singh having 145 caps, Mokhtar Dahari 168 caps, Soh Chin Aun (250 caps), Shukor Salleh (215 caps) Ahmad Yusof (103 caps), Jamal Nasir (111 caps) and Zainal Abidin (170 caps).

The number of caps for the Malaysians is high as the number of organised tournaments in Asia in the 60's, 70's and 80's were numerous. In the absence of a long domestic league, the national team was often playing in quite a number of tournaments.

Just two months after announcing the club would close their doors for the last time due to the regional financial



REGION'S BAD BOYS

In the Haifa derby, Maccabi Haifa's Avshalom Janno was sent off for bringing down Najwan Grayeb in the 86th minute in the Israeli National League match against Hapoel Haifa.

Haifa's newest young star Ali Karimi is waiting for his punishment. During Iran vs Vietnam, Karimi's argument with referee led to a burst of frustration. Karimi pushed the referee on two occasions which earned himself a red card.

Iran Omid team continued the game with 2 goals down.

After a heroic performance Iran managed to score two goals to equalize and advance to next round.

According to AFC and FIFA, insulting the referee buys the player a definite two years ban from all soccer tournaments. Vietnam Football Federation is pushing for maximum

penalty to be imposed on Ali Karimi, however, Karimi's plea for pardon has softened the VFF and AFC.

During a live broadcast Ali Karimi openly apologized for his behavior and asked for pardon.

Currently no official ruling has been issued by AFC.

crisis, the J.League's newly crowned Emperor's Cup champions the Yokohama Flugels have been named as the AFC Team of the Month.

The Flugels, who were due to merge with close rivals, Yokohama Marinos to form a new club called the Yokohama F. Marinos, lifted the Emperor's Cup for the second time in five years with a 2-1 win over Shimizu S-Pulse.

Goals from Yoshiaki Kuboyama and Takayuki Yoshida gave the Flugels a fairy-tale finish to what has been a sad end for a club that won the Asian Super Cup in 1995. Their Emperor's Cup victory saw them end the season with an unbroken streak of nine wins in a row.

The trophy was awarded amidst emotional scenes to club captain and international midfielder Motohiro Yamaguchi who, along with almost all of the Flugels squad, has secured a new contract elsewhere for next season.

The Sanyo Player of the Month trophy, meanwhile, goes to Al Hilal and Saudi Arabia striker Sami Al Jaber.

As Al Hilal have surged towards yet another league title, Al Jaber's, goals in the last month have been instrumental in the defending Champions cementing their position at the top of the league.

Al Jaber's contribution was highlighted by a hat trick against Al Shabab in their recent league encounter, a feat that gave the Riyadh-based side a closely contested 3-2 win.

The goals come after a difficult period for Al Jaber that saw family illness and the disappointment of not securing a move to Europe following the World Cup finals in France blunting his usually sharp cutting edge. But Al Jaber's performances should have proven that he's back to his best.

From one well-known striker currently doing the business on the pitch, to a former forward who's stealing the show on the sidelines.

Former Iranian international Ali Parvin is this month's Coach of the Month after guiding his club side Pirouzi to the top of the Azadegan League in Iran.

Parvin took over the reins of Pirouzi from Croatian coach Ivan Matkovic as the club languished near the foot of the table several months ago.

And the influence of the 1978 World Cup veteran has seen the 1997 Iranian champions return to something like their best form, winning five matches in a row to go ahead of second placed Sepahan with games in hand.

The month's final award, the Heineken Goal of the Month goes to Abdul Salam Juma of the Al Wahda club in the United Arab Emirates.

Juma's goal in the league encounter against Asian Club, Al Ain in the Championship quarter-finals.

After thrusting down the right wing, the ball was knocked inside where Juma picked it up, played a one-two with his colleague before thumping the ball home from outside the penalty area. Magic strike!

DUNHILL CUP ROUND MATCHES

Peyman Jamshidi and Farzad Majidi scored three minutes apart and Iran, two men down, rallied for a 2-2 draw with Vietnam Tuesday night, earning a place in the semi-finals of the Dunhill Cup.

Nguyen Phu Hung scored in the 79th minute to give Vietnam a 2-0 lead and start the celebrations among the 21,000 packing Thong Nhat Stadium.

Iran pulled Iran with one in the 64th and Majidi scored the equalizer tallying the first goal in three games against the host nation.

The draw gave Iran a 1-1-1 record and edged it past Russia's goal difference for second place in Group A, sending it to Friday's semi-finals in the eight-nation tournament against the Group B winner, likely South Korea.

Vietnam, which had clinched its place in the semifinals before kickoff, finished with a 2-0 record and will face the runner-up in Group B on Friday.

The desperate rally was a fitting ending to a bizarre night that began when Singapore gave up an own goal with time running out to hand Russia a 1-1 draw and clinch Vietnam's semi-final berth.

Vietnam led on Le Huynh Duc's 16th-minute goal when Iran's Ali Ansarian was ejected in the 72nd minute for his second yellow card.

Mohammad Ali Karimi joined him by showing the referee in the face. Teammates had to restrain him and escort him from the field.

Hung's goal appeared to decide the game but the late strikes rallied Iran and kept it alive in the tournament.

Earlier, Singapore, which had been held scoreless in two previous Group A matches, appeared to win when Nasir bin Nazri Mohammad scored into the upper right corner on a long-range blast in the 87th minute.

But with only seconds remaining in injury time, an effort at a clearing pass in front of the Singapore goal rebounded off a Singapore player and past his goalkeeper.

Group B will be decided Wednesday night when Malaysia (0-1-1) faces China (1-0-1) and South Korea (2-0-0) plays Bulgaria (0-1-1).

Maxin Bouznikin scored a goal in each half and Russia beat Iran 2-0 Friday to open the eight-team Dunhill Cup.

Bouznikin scored in the 42nd and 76th minutes, the second 11 minutes after Iranian keeper Mohammad Mohammadi was ejected for an intentional handball.

In a second game Friday, Van Sy Hung scored 11 minutes into the second half and Vietnam avenged its loss in the Tiger Cup final to Singapore five months ago with a 1-0 victory.

Van scored off a feed from midfielder Nguyen Hong Son after Vietnam failed to finish three clear chances in the first half.

Singapore defeated host Vietnam 1-0 to win the controversial Tiger Cup on Sept. 5. The Tiger Cup was highlighted by Indonesia's own goal in the final minute of an intentional 3-2 loss to Thailand in the last group match, the winner of which had to play Vietnam in the semi-finals.

Friday's matches were played at the sold-out Thong Nhat Stadium. South Korea, Malaysia, Bulgaria and defending champion China were to play in Group B on Saturday. The 15-game tournament is scheduled to run through Feb. 7.

China took the trophy of the first Dunhill Cup held in Malaysia two years ago after defeating Bosnia Herzegovina 3-0 in the final.

Zhang Yuning scored three of China's six second-half goals and paced a 7-1 rout of Malaysia Wednesday night that earned his nation the last semi-final berth at the Dunhill Cup.

Wang Peng broke a 1-1 tie in the 49th minute and Zhang started the rout with goals in the 52nd and 62nd. The victory finished China with a 2-0-1 record in Group A and sent it to a Friday meeting against Group B winner Vietnam.

Earlier Wednesday, Kim Dong-sun and Son Hyung-ho each scored a pair of goals to lead South Korea to a 5-1 romp over Bulgaria and clinch first place in Group B.

That earned South Korea a semi-final date with Iran, the second-place finisher in Group A.

Sun Dong Liang gave China the lead in the 12th minute, but Malaysia, which had only one goal in two previous matches, tied on Zami Mohammad Noor's goal five minutes later.

Wang began China's dominance four minutes after halftime and added a second in the 63rd to extend the lead to 5-1.

Ma Yong Kang added another goal in the 74th minute before Zhang closed out the scoring in the 86th minute.

Malaysia's Faizal Zainal was sent off in the final seconds with his second yellow card.

The South Koreans, who already had clinched a semifinal spot, were the only team to finish preliminary play with three victories, outscoring their opponents 11-2.

The Bulgarians, who were eliminated with two losses and a draw, looked listless at the start against South Korea, as Kim scored with almost no resistance on the match's first possession.

Krassimir Tchomakov converted a penalty in the ninth minute after Dessislav Roussev was taken down just inside the area to tie the score at 1-1, and it stayed that way until Sun scored the eventual game-winner in the 53rd minute.

Lee Kwan-woo added a penalty nine minutes later and Kim added his second goal in the 71st minute before Sun closed out the scoring in the 80th minute.

Only a few hundred fans showed up in 21,000-seat Thong Nhat Stadium, which has been packed on nights when Vietnam has played, but nearly vacant the rest of the time.

ITALY

LAZIO CLOSING IN ON FIORENTINA

Florentina's bid for its first Serie A title in 30 years got much tougher Sunday, as Argentine star Gabriel Batistuta was injured at the end of a 0-0 draw against AC Milan that cut the club's lead over surging Lazio to one point.

Batistuta hobbled off with a pulled left leg muscle one minute before injury time and Fiorentina saw its home winning streak end at 10 games.

Batistuta, who leads the league with 18 goals, was held in check most of the game, as was Milan's top forward, German Oliver Bierhoff.

"I would have rather lost the game than lost Gabriel, of course," Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni said.

Each club found the woodwork in the first half. Milan's Liberian striker George Weah sent a 20-yard blast off the post in the 19th minute, while Fiorentina's Brazilian Edmundo chested down a cross and slammed a powerful shot off the crossbar in the 42nd.

Lazio trounced Perugia 3-0 for its record ninth straight victory as Chile's Marcelo Salas scored twice and strike partner Christian Vieri once.

Salas raised his season tally to 11 goals and Vieri now has six goals in as many games since coming back from a serious knee injury.

The results left Fiorentina with a 13-3-4 record for 42 points. Lazio, which took home its lone championship in 1974, is next with 41 points, followed by Milan with 37.

Inter Milan moved into fourth place, with 34 points, by routing last-place Empoli 5-1. Youri Djorkaeff, a member of France's World Cup champions, had a hat-trick after veteran Roberto Baggio and Argentine midfielder Diego Simeone tallied Inter's first two goals.

Elsewhere, AS Roma continued its steady tumble down the standings, losing 3-1 at relegation battler Venezia. Roma, considered a title contender early in the season but now tied for seventh in the 18-team league, has won one of its last eight games.

In other games, Udinese extended its unbeaten run to five games by defeating Salernitana 2-1; Bologna snapped a two-game losing skid with a 3-1 win over Bari; Vicenza edged Piacenza 1-0; and Sampdoria of Genoa managed a 0-0 draw against Cagliari despite finishing the match with nine players.

Lazio.....3 Perugia.....0

In Rome, Salas found Vieri alone on the run in the 43rd minute, and the burly Italian slotted in the opening goal while a frozen Perugia defence pleaded for an off-side call.

Two moments of opportunism from Chilean Marcelo Salas in the last four minutes of the first half gave Lazio their ninth successive league victory.

Vieri repaid the favor five minutes later in injury time, sliding a return pass to Salas, who split three defenders before making it 2-0. The Chilean then sealed the match by scoring with 14 minutes left.

Lazio has not lost since going down 1-0 at Milan on Nov. 22, can tie the Serie A record for consecutive victories by winning at Cagliari this weekend.

Fiorentina.....0 Milan.....0

At Florence, Trapattoni said it was not immediately clear how long Batistuta will be sidelined, but indicated the captain will miss some games (see side story).

Neither club was willing to risk too much on the offensive end, preferring to protect their sometimes-suspect backlines. Fiorentina had been dominant at its Artemio Franchi Stadium before the game against Milan, outscoring its 10 victims there 24-4.

Milan did show that it can not be taken lightly as the title race heats up. Bierhoff and coach Alberto Zaccheroni, who both arrived from Udinese during the

offseason, have resurrected a team that finished in the middle of the pack the past two seasons.

Inter.....5 Empoli.....1

In Milan, Djorkaeff scored a penalty in the 35th minute and later added goals in the 66th and 90th.

Baggio opened the floodgates with a superb free kick six minutes into the game, and also earned the penalty, while Simeone tallied in the 15th.

Marco Carparelli scored for last-place Empoli in the 57th.

Venezia.....3 Roma.....1

At Venice, Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba set the tone for the hosts, scoring one minute into the game when he was left all alone near a post.

Filippo Maniero netted his eighth goal of the season in the 48th and defender Fabiano Ballarin made it 3-0 in the 66th with his first goal in 137 career games at the major and minor league levels in Italy.

Midfielder Luigi Di Biagio pulled one back for Roma with 22 minutes remaining.

Udinese.....2 Salernitana.....1

In Salerno, Tomas Locatelli and Brazil's Marcio Amoroso scored off headers for Udinese, which moved into sixth place. Salernitana cut the deficit to 2-1 in the 47th minute when Udinese defender Alessandro Pierini knocked the ball into his own net.

Salernitana would have claimed an unlikely point if Antonino Bernardini had converted a penalty in the 65th minute.

Bologna.....3 Bari.....1

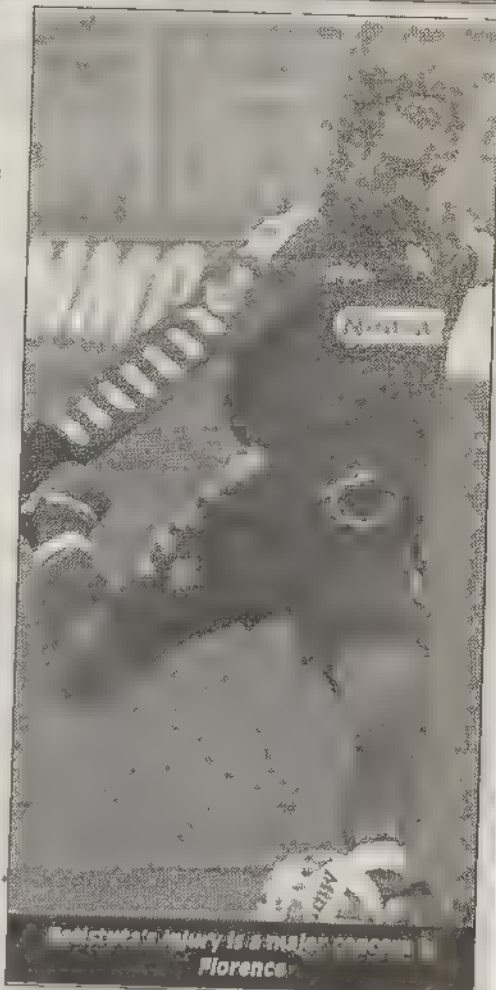
Swede Kennet Andersson's first goal since October halted Bologna's run of two successive defeats. He headed home in the 47th minute after Giuseppe Signori's 12th goal in 13 matches had earlier cancelled out Dane Peter Knudsen's sixth minute opener for the visitors. Bari self-destructed with the dismissal of Daniel Andersson in the 59th and South African Phil Masinga in the 87th. Russian Igor Kolyanov added a third in injury time.

Vicenza.....1 Piacenza.....0

At Vicenza, winger Gabriele Ambrosotti slotted in a pass from Uruguayan striker Marcelo Otero in the 10th minute for the victory. Piacenza played with 10 men from the 38th minute, when Daniele Delli Carri was sent off with a second yellow card.

Sampdoria.....2 Cagliari.....0

Not even the return of manager Luciano Spalletti — sacked last December to make way for England's David Platt — could rouse Sampdoria from a run of 12 matches without a win. Even this hard-earned point came at



the price of two dismissals — Marco Franceschetti in the 73rd minute and Argentine Ariel Ortega in the 85th.

Juventus.....2 Parma.....1

In the late game, Parma totally dominated in Turin, inflicted yet another defeat on Juventus, who are now in slump only a month before the commencement of the champions league and their clash against Olympiakos.

NEXT ROUND IN SERIE A

BOLOGNA V PARMA
FIORENTINA V UDINESE
INTER V PERUGIA
JUVENTUS V PIACENZA
LAZIO V CAGLIARI
SALERNITANA V EMPOLI
SAMPDORIA V ROMA
VENEZIA V MILAN
VICENZA V BARI

BATISTUTA INJURY UPDATE

After receiving medical attention, the Argentine tried playing on but fell to the ground and had to be carried off on a stretcher.

Earlier, Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni had suggested his inspirational captain could be absent for at least 40 days, but the club doctor refused to be drawn on the subject.

Batistuta's absence could leave the league leaders without three first-choice strikers for this week's visit to Udinese.

Belgian Luis Oliveira has already missed the last three matches with injury, while Brazilian Edmundo was reportedly booked on a flight for Rio.

The striker had requested permission to attend the city's annual carnival celebrations and resolve a long-standing court case over his role in a fatal car accident.

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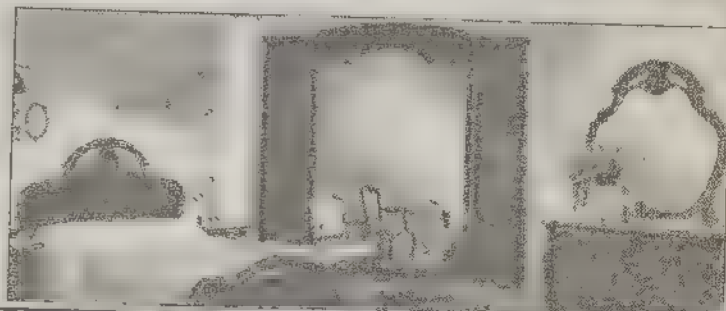
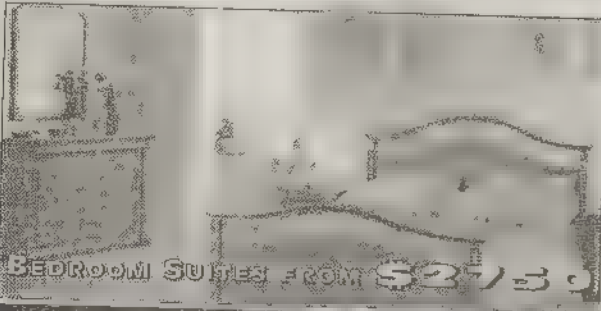
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Australian Features

COCO POPS KID FINALLY FINDS HIS

SNAP, CRACKLE AND POP

Diegos: "Well Ned, welcome to the Four Diegos version of 'This is your Life, Ned Zelic'."

"Your first club, on your meteoric rise to stardom outside Australia, was German club, Borussia Dortmund. You established yourself there as a star of the future before you moved on to a forgettable time, in England with Queens Park Rangers and in France, with Auxerre. You're now back in Germany playing well with TSV 1860 Munich. It seems that throughout your career you have been able to consistently perform at a high level in Germany but not been able to reproduce the same form elsewhere. Is this a fair comment?"

Zelic: "No it's not!"

Diegos: "Well you know that we are renowned for asking the hard questions".

Zelic: "Obviously you do. I've had a lot of injury problems in the past. I made one unhappy move to England where a lot of things contributed to my problems. The lifestyle and the club I was playing for, just didn't suit me, it was a very depressing time. I only ended up playing three games for Queens Park Rangers and after plenty of injuries, I'm just glad to be playing again regularly. Last year I played 31 of the 32 matches available. It's just really good to finally be injury free".

Diegos: "Is there any particular chemistry on the playing fields in Germany that you haven't been able to find elsewhere?"

Zelic: "I guess the game is played differently in every country. The French and the English have contrasting styles even though they are neighbours. In France, with Auxerre, I had the same problems with injuries. After a good start, I ended up being out of the game for six months and then it became very hard for me to re-establish myself. I'm a very impatient type of person and if I'm not playing for an extended period of time, I think a lot about the future and whether I should move on, and this is what eventually happened".

Diegos: "1860 was obviously a big year for your club. What has been your best year in the game?"

Zelic: "Definitely my first year at Dortmund. After three weeks of coming to the club and I could call myself a regular in that team. We made the UEFA Cup final in that year but were well and truly pumped by Juventus."

"Irrespective of the result, it was a fantastic experience and topped off a very successful year for me."

Diegos: "Ned we want to be the first reporters ever to ask you this question. Did you mean to shoot at goal or was it a cross gone wrong when you scored the winner in that game?"

Zelic: "Unfortunately for you guys, you don't get the scoop — I had to answer that question about 100 times after it happened. I really did mean to shoot. I remember that I did have the option to cross it to one of our strikers or go for goal. I went for goal and luckily for me it worked out. I know there are a lot of people out there who believe that it was a cross gone wrong but I assure everyone, for the 104th time, that I did mean to score."

Diegos: "When asked, many years ago, why you didn't make yourself available to play for Australia

Our second Guest of the Week is a man who stepped from the relative obscurity of Aussie domestic soccer to the high-powered, glamorous world of elite European football without missing a beat.

After bursting on to the scene with Borussia Dortmund in the German Bundesliga in the 90s, injuries and unhappy moves to England and France restricted his progress.

Fortunately our guest has been able to resurrect his career and is currently starring in the German Bundesliga. Please a big Four Diegos and Soccer Weekly welcome from Germany, to legendary Soccerroo and TSV 1860 Munich star, Ned Zelic

during the Atlanta Olympics, you were quoted as saying, 'that playing for Australia doesn't always put the Coco Pops on the table'. Firstly, what are the Coco Pops like in Germany and secondly, can you give us an idea how difficult it is for an overseas-based Australian player, to make himself available to play for the Soccerroos regularly?"

Zelic: "Well, I'm still an avid fan of Coco Pops. I mix them with some Frosties and have them every morning. It's a great start to the day. Back at the time you're referring to, I had just signed for Auxerre in France, and the club's coach put me under a lot of pressure not to go to the Olympics. I was in a situation where I had to basically make a decision, club or country. The fact that I'd already been to the Olympics in Barcelona, helped me make my decision. In hindsight, after being injured and out of the team for so long, I now regret not going to the Olympics. These are the decisions you have to make and unfortunately, sometimes things don't turn out as you would like them to."

Diegos: "Mark Viduka has just endured a period of

pressure and drama after walking out on his new club Celtic in Scotland. Can you understand his stance on the issue and can you describe what sort of pressure elite players overseas are forced to face up to week in week out?"

Zelic: "To be honest the only pressure I have felt is having to perform week in week out. There are pressures from supporters who expect a lot from players and clubs as well. Having said that, in my opinion, I can't understand how a 23-year-old like Mark, can let himself be put under so much pressure. I don't really know the reasons for his actions, I guess you'll have to ask Mark that personally. At that age I don't think that a player can afford to let himself be put under so much pressure."

Diegos: "Most big European cities have at least two great football clubs. Munich has the team widely regarded as the 'FC Hollywood' of the Bundesliga, the prima donna-spoilt brats, Bayern Munich and

your team, TSV 1860 Munich. What's the rivalry between both teams like and are Bayern really the pack of whingeing, tempestuous, rich boys,

that the media makes out they are?"

Zelic: "There is a big rivalry here in the city between both teams. It really is the normal thing, when you look at Inter Milan and AC Milan, Atletico and Real Madrid, Liverpool and Everton, its just another example of the great rivalry between clubs in European cities. The players at Bayern Munich are expected to win the title every year. All their players are under enormous pressure to perform every week. The press are on the backs a lot because their players are earning big sums, up to \$3-4 million a season, and as a result they like to dig up as much dirt as they can each of the players."

Diegos: "Your club's name TSV 1860 Munich is a very interesting one but a real mouthful. What do the club fans chant at games when supporting the team?"

Zelic: "They just sing 1860 over and over again."

Diegos: "I suppose if it's good enough for singer/song writer, Prince to sing '1999', its good enough for your supporters to sing '1860'. It's a little bit repetitive but original all the same."

Zelic: "It's enough to get me fired up."

Diegos: "The rumour doing the rounds on the Four Diego grapevine is that the much vilified, former German national coach, Berti Vogts, has recently turned his back on football and instead, directed his talents to acting. Is it a common occurrence for former footballers and coaches to take this career path and what are the chances of you getting your own show on German TV? Perhaps the German equivalent of 'The Great Outdoors with Ned Zelic' — it would be cold but we reckon it would rate well?"

Zelic: "At the end of my career I really don't know what I'm going to do. It's still a long way off. I'd like to play another eight or nine years and maybe, after that get into coaching. Maybe doing an entertaining talk show with the Four Diegos could be a real possibility — you never know!"

Diegos: "You have been the only Australian player to ever be selected to play for a FIFA All-Star team. Who have been some of the players that you've played with in these games and how did they cope with the Aussie 'Dencorub on the jock strap' prank in the dressing before the game?"

Zelic: "There were quite a few players — Lothar Matthaus, Jurgen Klinsman, George Weah, Redondo from Argentina and numerous other stars. Maradona was supposed to turn up as well."

"He was one of my boyhood heroes but didn't rock up in the end, which was disappointing. Perhaps he had heard of the 'Dencorub on the jock strap' prank and decided he wasn't going to take the risk."

Diegos: "You've been part of two failed World Cup campaigns for Australia. Is it still a burning desire for you to play for Australia in a World Cup finals series and what was your reaction when you heard that Australia may have to play through South America to make the next finals?"

Zelic: "I'm quite happy about the proposed qualifying route. I think it will stop people over-estimating our chances as they did against Iran. Everyone has realised since that Iran weren't a bad team and most definitely, not a walkover. If we're going to play in the World Cup we're going to have beat teams as good as the South Americans anyway."

"There's no point in getting to the World Cup and getting knocked out in the first round. It's definitely a goal of mine. It will most probably be

my last chance. It's a big aim, a huge goal and I would love to lead the team to the World Cup as captain as well."

Diegos: "Thanks Ned. Good luck for the rest of the season. As far as your proposed TV show is concerned, we think the German people would go for a show called 'In this Freezing Weather Why Would Anyone Want to go Outdoors' — hosted by Ned Zelic. It's sure to be a winner. Have a think about it? Adios Amigo!"

Zelic: "Thanks for the idea Diegos but I think the



Germans don't need to be told what to do indoors when the weather cold, if you know what I mean. Adios Amigos!"

"The Four Diegos are radio celebrities and soccer scribes on Melbourne's Stereo 97.4 FM Saturday 10 am — 12 mudday."

E-Mail 'The Diegos' on FourDiegos@bigpond.com

Until next time... Adios Amigos!

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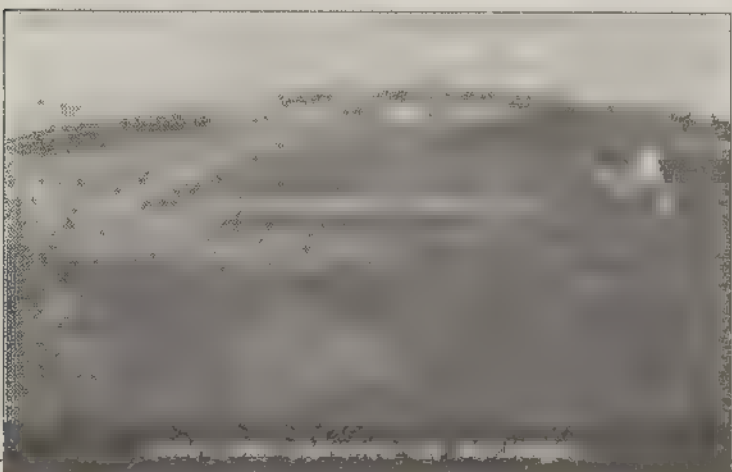
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The 1998 season with TSV was also been a good year for me."

Diegos: "Your goal against Holland in the Olympic qualifiers in 1992 is regarded, with Jimmy Mackay's cracker that got Australia to the World Cup in 1974, and The Four Diegos winner against the Cook Island Bus Company on our unofficial Contiki Oceania tour in 1995, as the greatest goal scored by an Australian in international competition."

"During your low times in recent years, did you ever go to your video collection and slip on that game to pep you up a bit? What did that goal do for your career at the time?"

Zelic: "Well basically that game secured a contract for me with Dortmund. That goal in the end, got Australia to the Olympics. I have watched the game a few times here and there, it brings back some great memories."

SOCCER WOMAN

WITH JANENE MARIN IN CANBERRA

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES 1998/99

Round Eight

SASI LATE CHARGE

SASI PIRATES	3
(Jessica Halfpenny 73m, Anna Ruotolo 80m, Lia Matto 85m)	
QAS STING	0

SASI Pirates made a late surge to record a valuable 3-0 victory over QAS Sting on Saturday at Hindmarsh Stadium to pick up three valuable points.

A scrappy display filled with stray passes and missed chances was suddenly brought to life in the final twenty minutes.

A poor defensive clearance fell invitingly for Jessica

Halfpenny who brilliantly thumped the ball home from 30 metres.

QAS had been unlucky not to take the lead in the 61st minute, Lisa Dunne's drive from the left corner of the 18-yard box crashing against the left post.

But the Pirates never looked back after the goal, and scored another two to dash any hopes of the Maroons.

Unmarked substitute Anna Ruotolo collected a well directed cross before calmly rounding the keeper and slotting home into the open net in the 80th minute.

Five minutes later, sub Lia Matto made it 3-0, finishing a fantastic Kimberly Morris ball from deep on the right with a crisp glancing header.

CANBERRA'S RECORD WIN

CANBERRA ECLIPSE	9
(Sarah Cooper 3m, Angela Iannotta 17m, 53m, Sacha Wainwright 34m, Lisa Casagrande 62m, 71m, 78m, Kim Channing 75m, Amy Kilpatrick 85m)	
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	0

Lisa Casagrande recorded an incredible fourth hat-trick for the season to lead pacesetters Canberra Eclipse to a 9-0 whitewash over Northern NSW Horizon in Saturday's Round 8 clash at Johnson Park, West Wallsend.

Canberra demolition of Northern Horizon is a record score in the Ansett Summer Series, eclipsing SA's 6-1

win over Victoria and NSW's 5-0 victory over Victoria, both set in 1996/97.

The attacking style of the Eclipse put Northern under constant pressure, missing Alison Forman and Joanne Powell through suspension.

Sarah Cooper opened the Eclipse account, scoring a fine goal after just three minutes to set up a 3-0 lead at the break which included a right-foot cracker by Sacha Wainwright.

Casagrande nailed her trio all within an inspired 16 minute period in the second half.

Angela Iannotta netted a double, and Kim Channing scored a minute after coming on as a substitute. The ninth was a neat backheel from substitute Amy Kilpatrick.

SASI MAKE IT A DOUBLE

SASI PIRATES	2
(Kristy Moore 71m, Sharon Black 83m)	
QAS STING	0

SASI Pirates kept their grandfinal chances alive with a 2-0 win over QAS Sting on Sunday at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Sasi finished the stronger in a tight match to defeat rivals QAS Sting 2-0, Kristy Moore breaking the deadlock in the 71st minute to slot home after a Jessica Halfpenny shot was stopped by the keeper.

Sharon Black then stole the ball off the defence with seven minutes remaining and slotted the ball into the open net.

After a very tight, even first 65 minutes, the Queenslanders started to gain a little momentum in their push towards goal.

However, SASI found that ability to hit back and took the lead in the 71st minute.

A fantastic ball was struck from midfield into space up front, and Jessica Halfpenny streaked past her defender to win the ball, to hit a low drive which the goalkeeper Claire Nichols parried.

Kristy Moore followed in to score from nine metres. SASI's Sharon Black doubled the lead with seven minutes remaining, on the spot to steal the ball off a hesitant Sting defence, continuing past the keeper and unchallenged to strike at the open goal.

NORTHERN SNATCH DRAW

NORTHERN NSW PIRATES	1
(Cheryl Salisbury 54m)	
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	1
(Amy Wilson 26m)	

Last-placed Northern NSW Horizon did well to bounce back after the previous day's embarrassing defeat to earn a 1-1 draw over frontrunners Canberra Eclipse last Sunday at Budgewoi Oval.

In the process, they denied Canberra's hopes of cementing their place in the grandfinal, which would have been a certainty had they won this match.

Bolstered by the return of suspended midfielder Alison Forman and defender Joanne Powell, Horizon fought well for an even contest against the favourites.

Northern put up a heavy defensive barrier and repelled most of what the Eclipse could muster, although Canberra looked quite tired.

Northern's goalkeeper failed to hold an Amy Kilpatrick strike, and the loose ball fell perfectly for Amy Wilson to slot into the open net from close range in the 26th minute.

Nine minutes after the break, Horizon were awarded a penalty, Canberra defender Traci Bartlett adjudged to have fouled Jamie Moran in the box.

Cheryl Salisbury hit confidently from the penalty spot to score the welcome equaliser.

AUSTRALIA HOPING FOR

FAVOURABLE WORLD CUP DRAW

The Matildas' are working hard towards participation in the 3rd FIFA Women's World Cup in the USA 19 June to 10 July.

However, more specific preparations cannot commence until we know exactly who we are up against, in what pool, where and when we will be playing.

These factors will be determined on February 14 when the World Cup Draw is conducted.

The Draw is such a vital part of one's assault on the competition, as the Matildas cruelly found out in their first World Cup finals appearance in Sweden 1995.

Our campaign suffered the worst of blows on the day of the Draw with Australia's name drawn out in Group C alongside superpowers USA and China plus the very strong Denmark.

Dubbed the Group of Death, it proved the rookie Matildas' greatest hurdle. All but unknown on the world stage back then, the team from downunder fought bravely but went down heavily in all three matches and finished last of the twelve nations.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since that first taste of World Cup finals competition. The same fate cannot be bestowed upon us again this time around.

Much better known and respected on the world stage thanks to victories over China, Italy, and Sweden, plus narrow single goal losses to the USA, the Matildas' recent record cannot be ignored with FIFA's seeding process for the Draw.

For the first time, sixteen nations will contest the

World Cup, an increase of four on the two previous events.

The top seeds to head each of the four groups of four have been named as USA (Olympic champions, 1991 World Cup champions, third in 1995 World Cup), Norway (defending World Cup champions, 1991 runners-up, and Olympic bronze medalists), China (Olympic silver medalists, fourth at 1995 World Cup), and Germany (runners-up 1995, fourth in 1991).

The remaining twelve countries are seeded in three pools of four teams each according to FIFA criteria, and then one team from each pool will be drawn into one of the four Finals groups.

The Draw Ceremony will be staged at World Cup venue Spartan Stadium in San Jose, California during an extended half-time period during this Sunday's USA versus FIFA World All-Stars match (see below).

New FIFA President Sepp Blatter will oversee proceedings and speak at other associated functions.

The sixteen delegations awaiting their World Cup fate are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, North Korea, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Russia, Nigeria, Ghana, Mexico, and USA.

The World Cup venues are Foxboro Stadium in Boston, Soldier Field in Chicago, Rose Bowl in Los Angeles, Giants Stadium in New York/New Jersey, Civic Stadium in Portland, Spartan Stadium and Stanford Stadium in San Francisco Bay/San Jose, and Jack Kent Cooke Stadium in Washington.

MURRAY A WORLD ALL-STAR

Matildas' supreme striker Julie Murray will proudly represent Australia when she lines up for the first ever FIFA World All-Stars Team in their match against Olympic gold medalists USA this Sunday as part of the World Cup Draw festivities.

Murray is thrilled to be honoured in such a way and will revel in the whole atmosphere. She has shown herself to perform at her best on big occasions, and has netted some vitally important goals for the Matildas.

Murray scored the solitary goal during the tour to Pyongyang, winning the third test and the series for the Matildas against North Korea last September.

Murray scored the winning goal in Australia's 1-0 victory over Sweden, the opening match of the European Tour in August 1997 and her single goal gave Australia a crucial 1-0 win against New Zealand in the 1994 Oceania World Cup Qualifiers.

* Scorer of a sensational hat-trick in the 1997/98 final of the Ansett Summer Series giving NSWIS the 3-2 victory over SASI and the national league title.

The World All-Stars is an exciting assembly of many of the world's finest footballers. FIFA has selected one player from each of the other fifteen competing teams, plus three additional players to grace the world stage. Murray jets off to San Jose this Thursday and has every chance of making the starting eleven, although the side will only have the opportunity to train together once before the game.

Coaches of the All Stars are Gunilla Pajkull,

Sweden's renowned 1991 World Cup coach and a pioneer of women's football, and Sylvie Beliveau, Canada's 1995 World Cup coach.

Other events in the two days leading up to the draw include competition meetings, media conferences and functions, a gala dinner, unveiling of the official poster and new trophy, and most importantly the chance for all 16 nations to network with other countries.

Both the World All-Stars match and the Draw Ceremony will be broadcast live on ESPN2.

FIFA WORLD ALL-STARS

Goalkeeper: Go Hong (China), Ulrika Karlsson (Sweden)
Defenders: Kim Sun Hui (North Korea), Lene Terp (Denmark), Linda Medalen (Norway), Corinne Diacre (France), Sara Mohamed (Egypt)
Midfield: Homare Sawa (Japan), Mercy (Canada), Bettina Weigmann (Germany), Antonella Carta (Italy), Inna Grigorieva (Russia), Laurie Hill (Mexico)
Forwards: Vivian Mensah (Ghana), Julie Murray (Australia), Sue Smith (England)

ROUND 9

Sat 13 Feb —NSWIS Sapphires v Canberra Eclipse (Sydney United Sports Centre), 3pm
 Sat 13 Feb —QAS Sting v Northern NSW Horizon (Southport Soccer Club), 3pm
 Sun 14 Feb —NSWIS Sapphires v Canberra Eclipse (Sydney United Sports Centre), 3pm
 Sun 14 Feb —QAS Sting v Northern NSW Horizon (Southport Soccer Club), 1pm
 Bye — SASI Pirates

The race for the 1998/99 Ansett Summer Series grandfinal has been whittled down to three teams, Canberra Eclipse, NSWIS Sapphires, and SASI Pirates.

All three still stand a strong chance to make the final two, yet with the Pirates and Eclipse yet to play their bye, the calculations are a bit more complex than at first glance.

Despite Canberra's five-point lead, they can still be overtaken and miss out on the grandfinal altogether, making for a most exciting couple of rounds to decide the finalists. Had the

Eclipse followed up their record 9-0 win over Northern NSW Horizon, with a second victory, they would have made certain their place in the final.

The Sapphires and Pirates have already tasted grandfinal fever, whilst Canberra have twice finished in fourth position.

The picture will be clearer after this weekend's outings where the Eclipse must earn at least two points to kill off the challenge of SASI Pirates.

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

next round

Friday 12 February

Newcastle Breakers v

South Melbourne

Breakers Stadium

Saturday 13 February

Marconi Fairfield v Canberra Cosmos

Marconi Stadium

Sunday 14 February

Northern Spirit v Carlton SC

North Sydney Oval

Adelaide Sharks v Gippsland Falcons

Hindmarsh Stadium

Sydney Olympic v Sydney United

Belmore Sports Ground

Perth Glory v Brisbane Strikers

Perth Oval

Melbourne Knights v Adelaide City

Knights Stadium

Bye: Wollongong Wolves

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

RESULTS ROUND 19

Newcastle Breakers 1
Sydney Olympic 1

Brisbane Strikers 5
Northern Spirit 1

Gippsland Falcons 2
Carlton SC 1

South Melbourne 3
Melbourne Knights 1

Sydney United 1
Adelaide City 1

Adelaide Sharks 1
Perth Glory 3

Canberra v Wollongong played last night. Details next week

Bye Marconi Fairfield

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	18	12	3	3	37	21	39
Sydney United	18	11	3	4	31	20	36
Adelaide City	18	10	3	5	29	15	33
Perth Glory	18	9	3	6	33	21	30
Northern Spirit	18	9	2	7	21	23	29
Carlton SC	18	8	4	6	35	24	28
Sydney Olympic	18	8	4	6	33	24	28
Brisbane Strikers	17	8	4	5	27	20	28
Marconi Fairfield	17	7	3	7	29	33	24
Newcastle Breakers	18	6	4	8	18	26	22
Wollongong Wolves	17	5	5	7	25	30	20
Adelaide Sharks	18	5	4	9	27	31	19
Gippsland Falcons	17	4	4	9	12	31	16
Melbourne Knights	17	3	4	10	17	29	13
Canberra Cosmos	17	1	2	14	12	37	5





ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 19
5-7 FEBRUARY
1999

ARCHIE'S BITTERSWEET GOODBYE?

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 2
Thompson 66, Macnicol 76
CARLTON SC 1
Moreira 23
At Mobil Park, Gippsland

By Damian Tnpodi

The Gippsland Falcons came from behind to beat Carlton by 2 goals to 1 in an encounter marred by controversies and adverse conditions at Mobil Park on Saturday.

Carlton finished the game with only nine men following sendings off by referee Con Diomis of Shaun Douglas at the 63rd minute — for what appeared to be a professional foul on Archie Thompson at the 63rd minute — and Simon Colosimo for a late tackle at the 72nd minute. Both players were already on yellow cards.

Up to the first sending off, Carlton was leading by one goal to nil.

The normally obliging Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic was too upset to speak to reporters after the game.

The game began at a 'hell for leather pace' with commitment and determination openly displayed by both sides.

As the match progressed, however, with neither side willing to succumb to the other, that, combined with the incessant heavy rain, particularly in the second half, caused tempers to fly, thus taking away from the spectacle.

The home side, to the delight of the Gippsland fans, played with great heart and spirit, nevertheless, as the game progressed, some of the class which has taken Carlton to the upper regions of the NSL ladder shone through.

Strikers Alex Moreira and the mercurial former Gippsland player Joe Tricarico cleverly began a system of running from side to side and exchanging positions, thus confusing their markers.

The visitors lifted their work rate and began moving

in numbers, resulting with decisive shots at goal by Marco Bresciano and Andrew Marth.

At the 23rd minute, a through ball by Bresciano split the Gippsland defence. The elusive Moreira, running through, left his marker, controlled the ball and neatly slotted it past Falcons keeper Bojo Jevdevic on its way into the net.

Carlton continued with some intelligent attacking play forcing the Gippslanders into making some defensive errors, resulting in a series of shots at goal by Bresciano, Tricarico and Moreira with Adrian Cervinski and Lubo Lapsanski providing good support.

The Falcons made some moves of their own with Archie Thompson, possibly playing his final game for the Gippsland team before joining his opponents, out to impress and was unlucky not to score against what could well be his new club.



Early in the game he was being well held by his marker Markus Stergiopoulos, but the young Olyroo managed to break the shackles and at the end became the hero of the winning side.

As this edition of Soccer Weekly goes to print, officials of Gippsland and Carlton are meeting behind closed doors trying to resolve the talented youngster's future, however, figures of \$40,000 were being bandied in the corridors which leads us to predict that Archie Thompson, after great service for Gippsland, will be wearing the Carlton colours as from the next game.

In the second half the Falcons came out with renewed vigour and determination to score the equaliser.

Will Hastie almost put his team on the scoreboard at the 49th and Thompson made some spectacular near scoring runs. It was on one of these runs that he freed himself from all markers and



on his way towards goal, just outside the penalty area was put down with a dangerous tackle by Douglas who got his marching orders.



The resulting free-kick led to a corner taken by Will Hastie who delivered the ball low, directed to Thompson's head who in turn directed the ball into the net.

The visitors' luck turned to the worse with

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 2,500

Referee: Con Diomis

Gippsland Falcons: Jevdevic, Hopkins, Osman, Bell, Thompson (Vargas 79), Hutchinson, Canosa, Hastie, Puca, Savage (Macnicol 76), Becynovski (Vargas 89).

Carlton SC: Anastasiadis, Anthopoulos, Stergiopoulos, Douglas, Marth, Bresciano, Moreira (Josifovski), Tricarico (Markovac), Cervinski.

Reds:

Carlton SC: Douglas, Colosimo

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Osman (GF)

2: Bell (GF)

1: Lapsanski (C)

the sending off of Simon Colosimo for a late tackle on a Falcons player. It must be noted that although Colosimo was already on a yellow card, referee Diomis, who appeared to have good control, signalled an outright red card for the incident.

The Falcons gained ascendancy and it was purely a matter of time before scoring a winner.

At the 76th, Macnicol who had come on as a substitute only three minutes earlier scored from a Lev Osman set up.

Despite the two men deficit Carlton valiantly tried to create something of their own, but it was to be the Falcons' day.

At the conclusion of the game Falcons coach Stuart Munro stated that his team began well.

"We conceded a goal which again was the result of mistake made by our defence. Carlton then took the upper hand, but after half-time we came back," stated the coach.

On the question of the Carlton sendings off, Munro stated that "for a change the shoe was on the other foot," obviously referring to the fact that his team on nine occasions finished the game with ten men.

Munro also stated that it was fitting that Archie Thompson put in such a good performance.

LOOK OUT AUSTRALIA: STRIKERS ARE BACK!

BRISBANE STRIKERS 5
Tollenaere 34, Zoricich 60, Laybutt 62, Meredith 65, Hughes 68
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
Arnold 81
At Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers surged into Ericsson Cup Top Six contention inflicting the worst defeat in Northern Spirit's brief one year history with a demoralising 5-1 win at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night.

The Strikers' win was their third successive scalp of a glamour Sydney club following its previous victories over Marconi and Sydney Olympic.

Brisbane coach John Kosmina had nothing but praise for his young side but remains cautious with eleven matches before the Top Six placings are decided.

"If you look at the way we played in other matches we have created as many chances as we did tonight," Kosmina said.

"But in terms of goals it was our best performance.

"There's still 11 rounds to go and we have to keep our feet on the ground. As much as we played well tonight we have to go to Perth next weekend and do it all again."

The Strikers are now in a bottleneck of contenders for top six berths after starting the match in eighth

position on 25 points while Spirit's defeat was their second on end after registering five wins and a draw from the previous six games.

The Strikers blew away the Spirit from the opening whistle dominating the star-studded visitors in all departments.

The home side went to the half time break leading only 1-0 following Reece Tollenaere's 34th minute goal after poking a foot out to deflect a Jeremy Harris blast past a stranded Spirit keeper Paul Henderson.

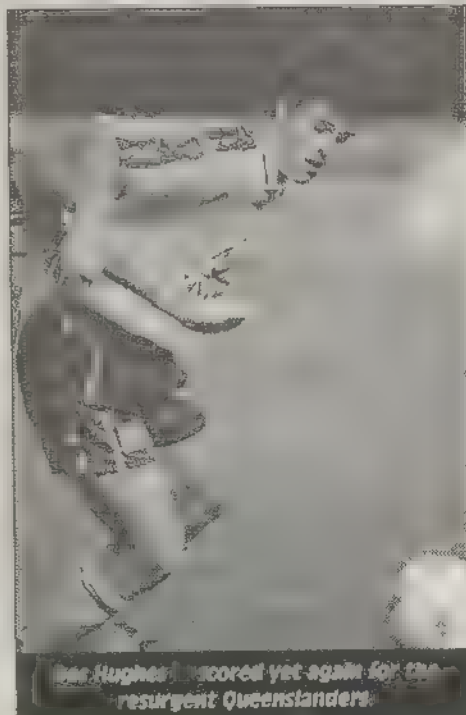
The Spirit lacked any commitment in the first half in which the Strikers dominated with seven shots to two.

However, what happened after the break was nothing short of breathtaking as the floodgates opened with four goals in an eight minute period midway through the second half.

Brisbane defender Chris Zoricich began the rot scoring a classic free kick from the edge of the box in the 60th minute.

Fellow defender Steve Laybutt stretched the home team's lead to three with another solo run just two minutes later and then Nick Meredith landed an unaccustomed right foot shot from close range before Des Hughes' third goal in five matches in the 68th minute.

The only consolation in a lethargic performance for Northern Spirit came ten minutes from time when



Des Hughes scored yet again for the resurgent Queenslanders.

player-coach Graham Arnold pushed forward in attack and was rewarded for his efforts beating Brisbane keeper Clint Bolton with a powerful strike.

Northern Spirit had only two other chances to find the net, both in the opening 45 minutes.

The first fell to dynamic midfielder Kresimir Marusic, who despite receiving plenty of room had a quiet match.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 5,436.

Referee: Eddie Lenna (Perth)

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Gwynne (Davidson 79), Zoricich, Laybutt, Tollenaere (North 82), Wehrman, Srnoj, Hams, Meredith (Kripe 76), Hughes, Stefanutto.

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Rudan, Marusic, Slater, Arnold, Moss (Bosnar 82), Watkins (Zane 12), Bliskapic, Cunico, Langdon, Enes.

Yellows: Nil

Red: Nil

Player Votes of the Year:

3: Meredith (BS)

2: Laybutt (BS)

1: Wehrman (BS)

Marusic showed his class firing in a dipping shot from 25 metres in the 32nd minute which almost surprised keeper Clint Bolton before it sailed over the crossbar.

The other chance came five minutes from halftime when Robbie Slater found space at the far post heading down a cross from Matt Langdon into open space a metre off the goal line.

But to Slater's astonishment there was no Spirit player following up for the easy tap in allowing the Strikers' defence ample time to clear.



ERICSSON CUP

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COVENY'S FINISHING THE DIFFERENCE

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
Curcija 19, Coveny 67, 72
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
Magdic 27
At Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

South Melbourne moved a game clear on top of the table with a 3-1 derby victory over Melbourne Knights.

Michael Curcija and Vaughan Coveny, a strike-force that is turning out to be lethal, accounted for South's three goals.

After the game South coach Ange Postecoglou said that his side was not getting anywhere near the credit that it deserved.

"Maybe it's my fault that this team doesn't get the credit it deserves" he said, "I could easily be here every week saying that we've got five players out, a player playing his first game for the season or a player playing out of position, making a million excuses for the team."

"To win seven games out of eight, with the problems we've had, where every week we've had minimum of five senior players out is a credit to this team."

South had Olyroo defender Con Blatsis, his first appearance for the season, as well as midfielder Steve Panopoulos, both back from injury.

Postecoglou admitted that he took a gamble on playing Blatsis and Panopoulos.

"If we had all of the players available, they wouldn't have played" he said.

The Knights, struggling badly at the foot of the table, had a perfect opportunity to take the lead within the first ten minutes.

Ice Kutlesovski was brought down inside the area by South sweeper Fausto De Amicis. Referee Simon Micallef had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

Ivan Kelic, a former South player, scorer of over 100 NSL goals, and Knights skipper for the day, froze and blasted the spot-kick high over the bar.

It was about the first time the Knights had been forward — South were virtually camped in the Knights half

A goal one felt was coming. Curcija had already once tested Joe Didulica and, had it not been for a Paul Magdic clearance, Curcija was surely have scored from a Jim Tsekis cross.

The Knights were made to pay for that penalty miss when South had got the goal that their domination had deserved.

Paul Trimboli took the ball to the bye-line before cutting it back to George Goutzioulis. Goutzioulis then unleashed a fierce shot that Curcija deflected high into the net.

South should have doubled their lead on the half-hour with a chance for Tsekis that was probably easier to score than miss.

Curcija's flick on took out the Knights defence, leaving Tsekis with just Didulica to beat to score his first South Melbourne goal.

He won't get an easier chance than this one but somehow managed to slide the ball wide of the post.

South had the chances to be more than their one goal

ahead at half time but it was the Knights who next found the net.

Just two minutes into the second half, the Knights left wing-back Paul Magdic ran at the South defence and they backed off and left him the space to let fly from 25 metres with a dipping shot that found the corner of the net.

It was Magdic's second goal for the Knights, his other came in his first spell for the club when he made just one senior appearance.

His day turned sour later however when he was sent off after being booked a second time, both for four fouls on Coveny.

Coveny came close to restoring South's lead soon after but headed Blatsis' long throw straight at Didulica.

Kutlesovski then had a terrific chance to give the Knights the lead in the 66th minute when he ran on to a long ball out of defence.

He appeared to bring the ball under control with his hand and had just Petkovic to beat but the South 'keeper spread himself well to block the shot.

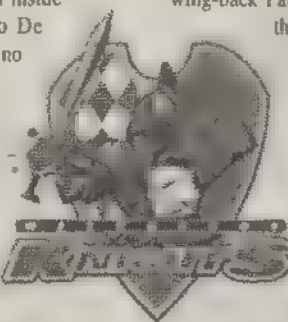
Again, the Knights were punished for their slipshod finishing as Coveny showed them how it should be done just a minute later.

Curcija did well to control the ball and then lay it off for the New Zealand international to blast the ball beyond the reach of Didulica.

A now rampant South added a third five minutes later.

Tsekis, playing one of his best games for the season, had a shot that bounced off the chest of Didulica to Coveny for him to ship the ball into the corner of the net.

Still South looked for more goals. Substitute Mustafa Mustafa released Curcija with his first touch and,



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 8,496

Referee: Simon Micallef

South Melbourne: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Blatsis, Panopoulos (Guzzupe 80), Coveny, Trimboli, Curcija, Polak, Goutzioulis (Mustafa 87), Tsekis.

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Banni, Nastevski, Deak (Pondeljak 46), Vukadin, Susa, Magdic, Kiratzoglou, Kelic (Collina 58), Reda, Kutlesovski.

Yellows:

South Melbourne: Goutzioulis (75)
Melbourne Knights: Magdic (27), Collina (73), Reda (86)

Reds:

Melbourne Knights: Magdic (78)

Votes for Player of the Year:

3 Coveny (SM)
2 Blatsis (SM)
1 Iosifidis (SM)

although Coveny was probably in a better scoring position, he elected to go it alone and forced Didulica into a great save.

At the end of the game, Knights coach Joe Biskie was left to lament the two golden opportunities that the Knights hadn't taken.

"I was quite happy with the first half but after we scored the equaliser we had the chance to take the lead with Ice (Kutlesovski) and after that, the game changed" said Biskie.

"If you don't put the chances away you can't win the game, we missed a penalty when it was 0-0 and then the other chance, I don't think we deserved anything out of the game, we wasted two good chances."

ZEBRAS HALT PUMAS' WINNING STREAK

SYDNEY UNITED 1
Sterjovski 18
ADELAIDE CITY 1
Mori 28
At Edensor Park, Sydney

By John Economos

Sydney United's former Soccerroo goalkeeper Mike Gibson, last Sunday night came out of retirement at Edensor Park to shine better than ever.

Gibson's fabulous display between Sydney United's uprisings restricted Adelaide City to a 1-1 draw, thus sustaining David Mitchell's chase for the Championship.

Gibson eagerly donned the gloves to make two fabulous saves to deny Adelaide City winning goals in the 74th and 93rd minutes.

In the first instance, displaying electric reflexes, he quickly smothered a low and well on-target Damian Mori drive from just inside the box.

Three minutes into injury time, and with the South Australians desperately seeking to hit the winner, industrious midfielder Bradley Hassell suddenly veered in from the left flank and flashed into United's box.

Hassell suddenly unleashed a right footed lifting drive towards the top left corner of the target.

A fully stretched Gibson launched himself in mid air to get both gloves to it.

United drew first blood in the 18th minute in what was always going to be a very tense battle, through a spectacular piece of technical work put in when sweeper Richard Plesa combined with striker Joel Griffiths.

The ever-improving United sweeper Plesa raided forward and played 'double one-tuos' with Griffiths



Jacob Burns ... another strong display by the Puma

Seven minutes from the break again United squandered another chance when right midfielder Steve Berry headed from the back post and just over the horizontal a Peter Bennett cross fired in from the right.

Three minutes after the break a revitalised Adelaide City stormed the United lines and Mori narrowly missed with his overhead kick after meeting a great cross from the right in by Bradley Hassell.

United's coach David Mitchell in the 63rd minute injected into the fray Danny Townsend to try and stretch Adelaide wide on the right flank.

But the 'Black and Whites' inspired by defenders Alex Tobin and Milan Ivanovic, increased their defending work rate to quickly neutralise all mobile attacks launched by United.

Best performers for United other than Gibson, were central marker Joe Vrkic, left midfielder Jacob Burns, teenage striker Joel Griffiths and right defender Peter Bennett. For the 'Black and Whites' industrious midfielders Angelo Costanzo and Bradley Hassell, plus stopper Alex Tobin were their pick.

A reserved 'Black and Whites' coach, Zoran Malic later stated: "We wanted to win this one badly, but it is not the end as there are lots of games left to play. We have to do a lot more work though if we are going to go somewhere."

Meanwhile United's Mitchell reflected: "I thought in the first half after we scored we did have them under so much pressure, then they scored against the run of play to level."

"From there, especially in the second half, they defended and battled very well for an even contest. I suppose in the end I wasn't disappointed with the draw."



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 4,912

Referee: E. Brazzale

Sydney United: Gibson, Burnett, Barrett, Plesa, Vrkic, Santa ab (Da, 70), Berry, Mori, Townsend 63, Burns, Griffiths, Sterjovski, Mitchell 73rd.

Adelaide City: Petkovic, Sabljak, Tobin, Ivanovic, Armour (Stam 88), Costanzo, Hassell, Taldra, Terminello, Mori, Veart.

Yellows:

Adelaide City: Hassell 21, Armour 43, Costanzo 82
Sydney United: Plesa 31, Barrett 55, Day 73.

Votes Player of the Year:

3 Gibson (United)
2 Costanzo (Adelaide City)
1 Vrkic (United)



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ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 19
5-7 FEBRUARY
1999

GLORY TRAIN BACK ON TRACK

ADELAIDE SHARKS 1
PERTH GLORY 3
Garcia 9, Edwards 30, Boutsianis 66
At Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

What a night to miss a penalty! With Perth leading 2-0, Derek Poimer had a chance to put the Sharks back in the swim when he stepped up to take a penalty in the 59th minute, courtesy of a Craig Deans' handball in the box.

Poimer's shot epitomised the Sharks' ongoing woes. He blasted the ball so far over the bar it was headed for the River Torrens at the Southern end of Hindmarsh! Had he scored, it would have changed the face of the game. When he did score in a goalmouth scramble in the 79th minute, it was too late.

No celebrations from players or fans — the Sharks were in a death roll.

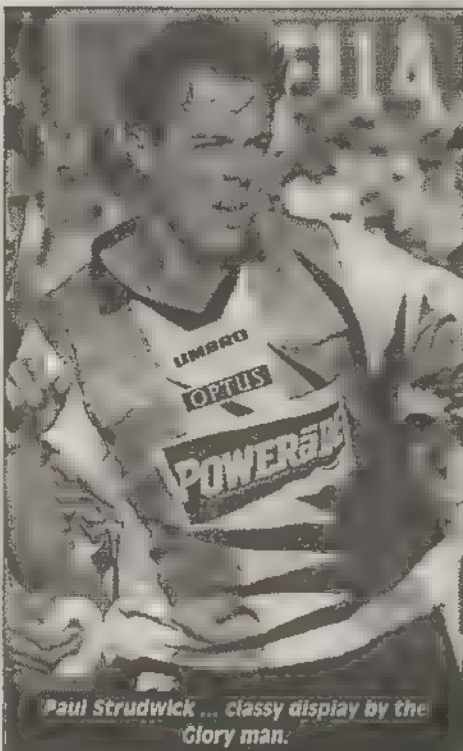
One week they're hot, the next they're cold. The Sharks' performances are becoming as inconsistent as the weather.

The word 'teamwork' seemed to get blown away in the strong, cold southerly wind, while Perth turned on a display of slick passing and a 'shoot from anywhere' attitude.

In an uncharacteristically lax, slow start for any game at Hindmarsh, possession chopped and changed uneventfully for the first ten minutes.

Then Perth, badly depleted of first team players, hit their straps.

After some pinball passing from defence, Alistair Edwards, fresh from playing in Malaysia, passed the ball



Paul Strudwick ... classy display by the Glory man.

out to speedy Vas Kalogeracos on the right.

Kalogeracos outpaced the Sharks' defence and squared the ball high across the penalty area to Michael Garcia charging in from the left. Great move, great finish, GOAL Perth: 1-0.

The Sharks had their chances after this, with Frank Tibaldi, Branko Milosevic and Hamilton Thorp combining, but Thorp's close range shots all went

astray. Richie Alagich ran his heart out all night, constantly playing text-book soccer, only to see his hard work undone.

He forced the save of the match in the 86th minute with a low shot slammed toward the inside of the near post. Tony Franken's hands must still be stinging!

Poimer missed a golden opportunity early when New Zealand international Danny Hay passed the ball straight to him near the 18 yard box.

He dodged the Glory defence for a one-on-one shot with super-experienced Franken, whose return to the pitch was a deciding factor in Perth's win.

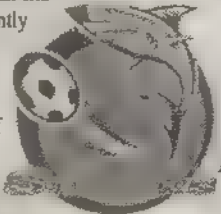
Franken blocked Poimer's shot with expertise, and continued to save brilliantly throughout the game. 88.5 Coast FM Player of the Match Paul Strudwick, playing uncharacteristically in the left back position, also gave the Sharks a lesson in defending.

He put in some of the most amazing tackles seen at Hindmarsh this season, always at crucial times in the game, then surged forward to feed the rampaging Vas Kalogeracos, Robert Trajkovski, Con Boutsianis and Edwards.

Sharks' keeper David Miller could have taken a few lessons from Franken.

There was not much he could do about Perth's first goal, but the second was a gift. Trajkovski pumped the ball high into the box. Miller stood flat-footed. As he reached up to grab it, Edwards leapt over the top of him and headed the ball into the net: 2-0.

The second half is usually the Sharks' half, but



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Estimated 2000

Referee: Gerry Connolly

Adelaide Sharks: Miller, Alagich, Castro (Artone 76), Kuzmanovic, Souns, Kokkinopitis, Milosevic, Thorp, Poimer, Tibaldi (Pezas 58), Gibson (Dunic 76).

Perth Glory: Franken, Trajkovski, Miller, Hay, Wilkinson, Deans, Strudwick, Garcia, Edwards, Kalogeracos, Boutsianis.

Yellows:

Adelaide Sharks: Souns, Thorp

Votes for Player of the Year:

- 3 Paul Strudwick (FG)
- 2 Alistair Edwards (PG)
- 1 Vas Kalogeracos (PG)

nothing clicked. Souns and Thorp were cautioned as Perth ran riot. It was shooting practice for Kalogeracos, Boutsianis and Trajkovski. Souris' foul on Kalogeracos resulted in the goal of the match.

Boutsianis took the free kick 35 metres out on the right. What a shot, high and hard into the top far corner of the net: 3-0.

Poimer's late goal was little consolation for the Sharks. The 3-1 scoreline was a fair reflection of the game.

ANOTHER OWENS SPECIAL ALMOST ENOUGH FOR BREAKERS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1
Owens 61
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
Juric 82
At Breaker Stadium, Newcastle

By Soccer Weekly

Newcastle's impressive run of results continued on Friday night when they went within an ace of adding another big-name scalp to their list, but in the end Ante Juric saved the visitors, the game ending in a 1-1 draw at Breakers Stadium.

The highlight of the game was another Greg Owens long-range special. Who could forget his amazing two goal demolition of then unbeaten Perth Glory. This time he picked up the ball in a similar position and smashed it low and hard past Olympic's Bouhoutsos to give the Breakers the lead in the 61st minute.

However there is another name that is cropping up these days at Newcastle: John Buonavoglia.

He is simply the best buy in the Ericsson Cup this season. Coming from the relative obscurity of NSW Super League (he was a joint winner of their player of the year last season), he consistently tormented the Olympic defence with his running and speed.

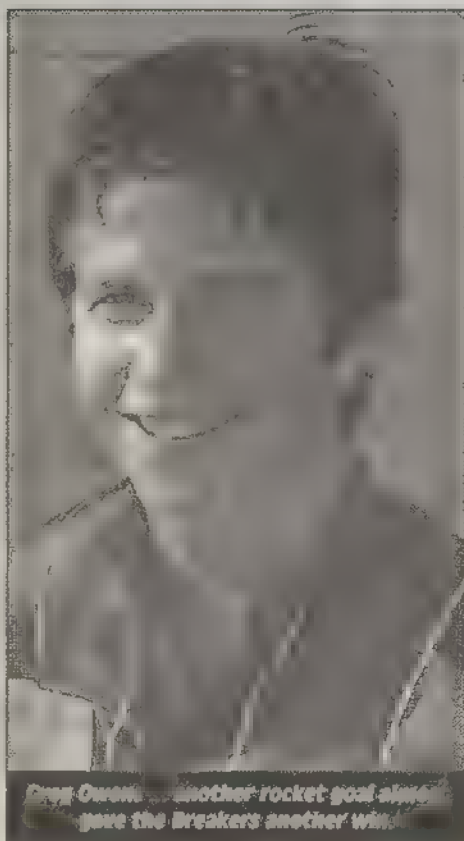
Newcastle dominated the first period with Buonavoglia a constant threat, however, it could have been Olympic that opened the scoring when, in the third minute Jason Culina's shot was cleared by Newcastle's Todd McManus.

Culina is apparently subject to a transfer request from Danish side Brondby.

In the ninth minute the home side's Mark Wilson had a shot saved on the line by ex-Breaker Scott Thomas and a minute later Shane Pryce was given a yellow card for a reckless tackle on the visitors' Scott Baillie.

In the 24th minute the Breakers' Wilson gave away possession to Cardozo but his shot went just wide of the right side of the goal.

Six minutes later Buonavoglia broke from Baillie and was on way to goal, passing to Greg Owens but it was saved by George Bouhoutsos. The teams went in 0-0 at half-time.



Greg Owens ... another rocket goal almost gave the Breakers another win.

Just before Newcastle scored in the second half Emerton could have scored for Olympic, but Catlin was up to the task.

Olympic's 82nd minute goal came courtesy of a delicate ball over the head of the home defence from the immaculate Pablo Cardozo.

Sweeper Ante Juric, who had been pushed up into midfield by coach Branko Culina, beautifully headed the ball out of reach of Bobby Catlin to earn a vital away point.



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 4,055

Referee: J Blaney

Newcastle Breakers: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, McManus, Ritchie, Wilson, Buonavoglia, Wiczorek, Owens, Shannon, Haythornthwaite, Sanderson, Uml, Yoon.

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoutsos, Thomas, Culina, Cardozo, Emerton, Brennan, Juric, Cervinski, Baillie, Durakovic, Blagojevic, Kalantzis, Tome, Augerinos.

Yellows:

Newcastle Breakers: Pryce 10, Catlin 82.
Sydney Olympic: Juric 88.

Votes for Player of the Year:

- 3 Buonavoglia (NB)
- 2 Baillie (SO)
- 1 Roberts (NB)

Buonavoglia was not finished however, he powered down the left crossing to Korean Sang Chul-Yoon but he was unable to score shortly before the ref blew time.

After the game Olympic keeper George Bouhoutsos said he was happy in the end that his side did not lose.

Breakers' officials said later that it was disappointing that they gave away a soft goal, and given that Olympic's budget was much bigger than theirs, in terms of playing personnel, it was a reasonable result.

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SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round 19

Gippsland Falcons v Albury Wodonga

(To be rescheduled)

VIS	.....1	Carlton	.....5
South Melbourne	.....1	Melbourne Knights	.....1

Bulleen Inter v Bye

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	15	9	3	3	28	15	30
Carlton	14	9	2	3	41	16	29
VIS	13	7	3	3	25	19	24
Gippsland Falcons	14	6	2	6	23	23	20
Melbourne Knights	14	5	3	6	24	26	18
Bulleen Inter Kings	13	4	2	7	13	23	14
Albury Wodonga	13	0	1	12	13	45	1

Round 20

Saturday 13 February

Bulleen Inter v Albury Wodonga,
(Veneto Park, 4pm)
South Melbourne v Gippsland Falcons
(To be arranged)
Melbourne Knights v VIS,
(Knights Stadium, 3.30pm)
Bye v Carlton

LEADING

SOUTHERN SCORERS

Andrew Mashoian	South Melbourne	11
Jovanco Novacevski	Carlton	6
Scott McDonald	VIS	6
Deniz Ekicic	Carlton	5
Tony Ouliaris	Carlton	5
Erhan Bayraktar	South Melbourne	5

NORTHERN SUMMARY

Sydney Olympic started Round 19 with a 2-0 away win over the Newcastle Breakers marked by a stunning goal from Peter Zorbas after 72 minutes.

Peter Papanikitas said it was the best goal he had seen by a youth player, while Frank Arok was reported as having said it was the best he had ever seen too! It must have been something special.

Ah Jomaa had opened the scoring for Olympic in 65 minutes.

Queensland Academy of Sport surprised Northern Spirit with a 2-0 win at Suncorp.

Daniel Kukucka scored both goals for Sydney United in its 2-0 win over Marconi Fairfield Colts at Edensor Park. The first was in 22 minutes, the second only a couple of minutes before the end.

Sydney United Colts had an identical result away to Wollongong Wolves Colts, and again there was a single scorer. This time it was Goce Trposki with two late strikes in 74 and 85 minutes which marked the difference between the teams.

The New South Wales Institute of Sport downed Sydney Olympic Academy by four goals to nil at Wentworth Park. Nahuel Arrarte, Dylan McAllister, Simon Catanzaro and Lieghal Dellis were the scorers for NSWIS.

The Australian Institute of Sport had an 8-0 win over Northern Spirit Colts, but there were no details to hand at time of writing.

The ACT Academy played Wollongong Wolves on Monday night. Details next week.

SOUTHERN SUMMARY

Carlton had a 5-1 win over the Victorian Institute of Sport at Optus Oval. Ace Stojceviski started the scoring for the Dark Blues after six minutes and Tony Ouliaris rounded it off in the eightieth minute.

In between Steve Martin was on the board in 11 minutes, David Grbac in 39 and Adam Pongho in 77 as Carlton shared the goals around.

Striker Scott McDonald replied with the VIS's goal in 69 minutes.

In the only other match played in the Southern Division, South Melbourne and the Melbourne Knights drew 1-1 at Bob Jane Stadium.

Andrew Mashoian extended his lead on the goalscoring ladder with the only goal for the Blues, and Mijo Trupkovic scored for the second week in succession for the Knights.

The match between Gippsland Falcons and Albury Wodonga will have to be rescheduled and Bulleen Inter had the bye.



NORTHERN DIVISION

Round 19

Newcastle Breakers	.....0	Sydney Olympic	.....2
QAS	.....2	Northern Spirit	.....0
Northern Spirit Colts	.....0	AIS	.....8
Sydney United	.....2	Marconi Fairfield Colts	.....0
Wollongong Wolves Colts	.....0	Sydney United Colts	.....2
Sydney Olympic Academy	.....0	NSWIS	.....4

Monday 8 February

ACTAS v Wollongong Wolves
Marconi Fairfield — Bye

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	17	11	5	1	69	12	38
Sydney Olympic	17	11	2	4	45	18	35
Northern Spirit	17	11	2	4	32	15	35
Newcastle Breakers	17	10	4	3	34	17	34
Marconi Fairfield	15	9	5	1	46	12	32
QAS	16	10	1	5	47	21	31
Wollongong Wolves	15	10	1	4	34	13	31
NSWIS	15	9	3	3	37	12	30
Sydney United	17	7	4	6	31	24	25
Marconi Fairfield Colts	17	5	3	9	16	28	18
Sydney United Colts	16	4	0	12	18	48	12
ACTAS	17	3	2	12	23	44	11
Northern Spirit Colts	16	2	2	1	14	70	8
Wollongong Wolves Colts	17	1	3	13	12	55	6
Sydney Olympic Academy	17	1	1	15	8	77	4

Round 20

Friday 12 February

Newcastle Breakers v
Sydney Olympic Academy,
(Breakers Stadium, 5.45pm)

Saturday 13 February

Sydney United Colts v QAS,
(Edensor Park, 4pm)

Northern Spirit v AIS,
(Cromer Park, 4pm)

Wollongong Colts v Northern Spirit Colts,
(Brandon Park No 2, 4pm)

NSWIS v Marconi Fairfield Colts,
(Valentine Park, 6pm)

Sydney Olympic v Sydney United,
(Belmore Sports Ground, 4pm)
Bye — Wollongong Wolves

Marconi Fairfield 1 ACTAS 0
(Already played)

LEADING NORTHERN SCORERS

Mark Hagger	Marconi	15
Russell Miner	QAS	12
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	9
Kevo Guleserian	AIS	9
Daniel Kukucka	Sydney United	9
Anthony Mondello	Marconi Colts	8
Anthony Bauer	Newcastle Breakers	8
Chad Mansley	Newcastle Breakers	8
Paul Tuturevski	Wollongong Wolves	8

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BAD-BOY BASLER DEFENDS WIFE'S HONOUR

Bayern Munich's turbulent midfielder Mario Basler is in trouble again following a fracas in a Bavarian restaurant Munich's AZ tabloid reported.

The latest headlines for the gifted but erratic Basler come only days after his manager set a special training regime for the injured midfielder.

The 30-year-old was involved in a grapple with a guest in a restaurant near Munich. Basler said the man tried to touch his wife, Iris.

Basler has come in for criticism due to the hectic pace of his social life before.

The turbulent 30-year-old was dropped from the German squad for two friendlies in the United States after criticism for playing cards late into the night before a friendly against the Netherlands.

In October he was fined by Bayern for spending too much time at the Oktoberfest beer festival in Munich. Last season, Bayern hired a private detective to watch his whereabouts.

Bayern manager Uli Hoernes has said that he thinks Basler is too lazy and should work harder. He did not specify in what areas he should work harder. Perhaps in his card playing or beer drinking?

Perth Glory coach Bernd Sange may have described Melbourne Knights' ground as a "goat paddock," but it is not the only one. France World Cup striker David Trezeguet is nursing a thigh injury which could have resulted from the poor state of Monaco's Stade Louis II pitch.

Trezeguet, unable to train since his substitution during Monaco's League Cup second round loss to Paris St Germain, looked set to miss their trip to Le Havre in the French league.

Monaco sporting director Henri Biancheri has hit out against the state of the pitch, criticised last year by visiting foreign teams including Manchester United. "It's now worse than we've ever seen before," Biancheri said. "And that makes us lose points and matches because it's a lot easier to defend than attack on such a surface."

The pitch, laid on a concrete bed and only 40 cms deep when it should be at least double that, has been neglected by its official carers, the municipality's office for parks and gardens.

"I ask myself why the practice of football is not prohibited on that pitch. It's unplayable," said PSG striker Bruno Rodriguez.

PSG and Monaco played two hours of football there without scoring, PSG eventually winning 3-2 on penalties.

Fernando Redondo, Real Madrid's Argentine international midfielder, is expected to be out of action for another month, club officials said. Redondo has not played since mid-December after injuring his right knee in training.

Real Madrid hopes to have its key playmaker back for its European Cup quarter-final first leg against Dynamo Kiev on March 3.

But the European champions will not have him back in time for the Spanish derby match against Barcelona on February 14.

Juninho said the public clamor for him to stay at Atletico Madrid helped him make up his mind.

The midfielder had been negotiating a return to English soccer for the past two weeks, with Aston Villa and Middlesbrough vying for his signature, but his Spanish club announced he had decided to stay until at least the end of the season.

"The affection of the supporters has given me much of the strength to carry on at Atletico," Juninho said.

During Atletico's recent matches, in which he made appearances on both occasions as a substitute, his name was chanted continually throughout the games.

"Never has my head been so full of so many things," Juninho said.

"However everything seems to have worked out well and I will be staying here until the end of the season and hopefully until the end of my contract."

Juninho arrived in Spain during the summer of 1997, after being transferred from Middlesbrough, and signed a five-year contract with Atletico.

He was reported to be keen to leave Atletico because new coach Arrigo Sacchi was not playing him enough.

However Juninho said he had nothing personal against Sacchi. "It's just that a player is never happy being on the bench."

Sacchi has maintained that he wants Juninho to stay at the club. Middlesbrough, though, are refusing to give up on the player.

Chairman Steve Gibson said, "We shook hands with Atletico Madrid officials and Juninho over a deal after we flew back to Spain from England. I was surprised to be informed the following day that the deal was on hold."

"I am upbeat, though, at the prospect Juninho will come back to the Riverside Stadium."

Juergen Klinsmann said that he planned to settle in the United States to give his child a normal life.

Klinsmann said he was organising a match on May 31, to mark his retirement between ex-players from VfB Stuttgart and an international team made up of former teammates from Inter Milan, Tottenham Hotspur, AS Monaco and Bayern Munich.

"There won't be a return to Germany," Klinsmann was quoted as saying in Bild, Germany's largest newspaper.

"Germany will be just a holiday destination for us. I want to stay in the United States."



Klinsmann is off to the US to start a new life away from soccer.

"I want my son to go to school here and grow up as a normal child, not the son of a prominent soccer player," Klinsmann said.

The German Soccer Federation (DFB) angered the former striker and national captain by refusing Klinsmann's bid for an official farewell match.

Instead he has organised a match involving the 1989 Stuttgart team which reached the UEFA Cup final. It will include Guido Buchwald, Karlheinz and Bernd Foerster.

THE ARCHITECT OF THE VOLCANO GETS BURNT IN SPAIN

It's been the week for coaches to make a goose of themselves in front of the media. In news from Spain, pressure was growing from Real Madrid supporters and sports media for coach Guus Hiddink to either step down or be sacked in the wake of a newspaper interview in his home country.

The interview with the Dutch World Cup coach was published last Saturday when Hiddink was reported as saying: "Real Madrid are a famous club with a huge reputation but little money and large debts."

Hiddink has confirmed that the quotes were correct but, in echoes of the Glenn Hoddle furor in England, said they were taken out of context.

He was admonished publicly by the club president Lorenzo Sanz.

Sanz said: "He cannot talk about economic matters because he does not know about them. The only thing that can be considered correct for him to say is that this board has made tremendous efforts to take this team forward."

Sanz confirmed he had advised Hiddink not to repeat his comments but apparently also told him his job was not in immediate jeopardy, although he could be fined for a breach of club discipline.

Spanish sports papers have been full of it and Marca described the current situation as "the most difficult hours for Hiddink since he took over as the Real Madrid manager."

It dubbed him "the architect of a volcano."

Real are still reeling from the public criticism they suffered in the wake of

the 4-0 thrashing by Deportivo Coruna and play at Barcelona on February 14.

Jean-Marie Pfaff, former Belgium international goalkeeper, has been sacked as coach of Belgian club Ostend.

Pfaff only took on the job on Oct. 28, when Ostend were one from bottom in the first division. The club is now in last place.

The club said it took the decision after consulting the players.

Pfaff won 64 caps for Belgium between 1976 and 1987 and also played for German side Bayern Munich.

His assistant, Ronny Brackx, has taken over as caretaker manager.

A FIFA team on a final inspection of Nigerian facilities for the World Youth Cup has criticised the stadiums at two venues, local newspapers reported.

"We are not pleased with facilities at the Calabar stadium, (and the) same applies to Port-Harcourt," Jack Warner, CONCACAF president and head of the delegation, said, Warner, quoted by the semi-official Daily Times paper.

Other papers carried similar reports.

The independent Vanguard paper said the team had expressed concern over the absence of floodlights, scoreboard and practice pitches.

Last week, another FIFA team described hotels at the southwestern Ibadan city venue as "poor" and ordered the organisers to improve them within a month.

The tournament is scheduled for April 3-24 and Warner said his team would return by the end of February.

FIFA switched the 1995 tournament to Qatar from Nigeria, citing health and security reasons. Nigeria is one of five African countries bidding to host the 2006 World Cup.

German national coach Erich Ribbeck was philosophical about a series of mishaps that have hit his team's current tour of the United States to play two friendlies.

"You just have to do your best to get by when upsets happen that are beyond your control," Ribbeck said.

The litany of upsets started at the airport when a mysterious suitcase from Egypt went unclaimed and caused a security alert, delaying departure.

Then a snow plough damaged the runway, further delaying take-off for another two-and-a-half hours.

On arrival in Jacksonville, the stairs of the aircraft didn't work, and the team was stuck on the tarmac again.

Heavy rainfall meant that floodlights at Fernandina Beach High School, where the team was due to train, didn't work, forcing them to play kick-tennis in the dark.

Ribbeck said the training ground was fine now and the fact that the corners of the pitch are narrower than the center was "not so terrible."

Stand-in captain, Lothar Matthaeus, said, "The main thing is that we have had some fun and that the lights don't go out during our games."

The squad is already missing key players through club commitments, including Christian Ziege and Oliver Bierhoff of AC Milan and Joerg Heinrich of Fiorentina, while Bayern Munich's Mario Basler has been dropped (see story above).

Meanwhile, Lothar Matthaeus will captain Germany in their two friendly matches in the United States.

Coach Erich Ribbeck said the veteran was a perfect interim solution as team captain Oliver Bierhoff cannot join the tour because of playing commitments at AC Milan.

And the bad news continues for the Germans as veteran striker Ulf Kirsten was ruled out of playing again during Germany's trip to the US after pulling a calf muscle.

Kirsten, 33, had been guaranteed a place in the team for both games alongside Kaiserslautern's veteran former East German international Olaf Marschall and is now likely to be replaced by one of the two newcomers. It will be either Hansa Rostock's Oliver Neuville or Michael Preetz of Hertha Berlin.

Rennes scored three goals in the opening 10 minutes of the second half as it beat second division leaders Troyes 4-0 in the second round of the French League Cup.

Burundi striker Shabani Nonda scored twice, opening his team's account with a 47th minute penalty after being brought down by Troyes goalkeeper Nicolas Dehon.

Midfielder Edouard Cisse struck the second four minutes later, chipping the ball over Dehon after a cross from the right by Nicolas Goussé.

Nonda, who has scored 10 goals in the league championship this season, made it three in the 55th minute after a solo run on the left.

Cyril Yapi completed the rout six minutes from time.

A HERO DIES IN FRANCE

The goalkeeper for French First Division side Lyon Luc Borelli, who was decorated for bravery in 1996, has been killed in a car crash.

when his car collided with a truck.

but remained an understudy to French international Bernard Lama.

heroism when he tried to save a man from committing suicide.

The goalkeeper, who was married with two children, dived into

man failed to regain consciousness.

EUROPE

SAUNDERS AND RAUL FIRE IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

Young Barcelona midfielder Xavi Hernandez, widely credited with saving his coach Louis van Gaal from being fired, was rewarded on Saturday — with demotion to the club's B team.

Xavi's diving header against Valladolid back in December ended four successive defeats for the struggling Catalans.

That 1-0 victory set Barcelona on its way to its current seven-match winning run — and saved van Gaal from what had seemed certain dismissal.

Xavi, 19, was drafted into the first team squad earlier this season as Barcelona's injury list continued to grow.

But the return to fitness of Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique, plus the arrival of Dutch international Ronald de Boer, have hampered his chances of playing first-team football and he was named on Saturday in the B squad scheduled to face Atletico Madrid B later in the day.

"It had to happen sooner or later," the youngster mused on learning of his step down the ranks.

Real Madrid's stand-in skipper Raul Gonzalez fired a hat-trick to inspire a dramatic 3-2 victory over Valladolid on Sunday.

The result keeps Real within three points of leaders Barcelona, who had a late goal from Patrick Kluivert to thank for their 2-1 win at Extremadura — a seventh successive first division win for the Catalans.

After 21 games, Barcelona lead the standings on 40 points, with Celta Vigo — who came from behind to run out comfortable 4-1 winners over Villarreal — ahead of Real Madrid and Valencia on goal difference.

Real Madrid had been on course for a comfortable victory at the Bernabeu, with Raul converting penalties after 17 and 52 minutes.

But former Atletico midfielder Juan Vizcaino got Valladolid back into the game on 65 minutes and Diego Klimowicz — taking advantage of a slip from Fernando Sanz — struck with three minutes to go to bring the visitors level.

The game looked set to finish all square until Raul latched onto a right-wing cross from Roberto Carlos to seal victory for the European champions.

Barcelona, who play host to Real at the Nou Camp next Sunday, fell behind to Extremadura in the 19th minute as Carlos Dure swept in from the edge of the area.

But they came back to level through Luis Enrique, who finished off an exquisite four-man move at the near post, and clinched victory with eight minutes to go as Kluivert scored his sixth of the season.

Two first half goals by British striker Dean Saunders set Benfica on the way to a 5-0 home win over Farense.

Reigning champions Porto stayed top, maintaining a three-point lead over Benfica after scrambling a 1-0 win at their Antas stadium over lowly Maritimo.

Porto have 49 points against 46 for Benfica, while Boavista are two points further back, but with a game in hand.

Porto's winner came after 33 minutes when Yugoslav winger Ljubinko Drulovic shot from inside the box.

Saunders struck in the 35th and 45th minutes, both times from finely judged through balls by Benfica's inspirational captain Joao Vieira Pinto.

A Farense own goal and two goals from striker Nuno Gomes, who took his tally to 18 for the season, completed a miserable night for the visitors.

Feyenoord's game at Cambuur Leeuwarden was called off due to the poor state of the pitch, leaving the top of the Dutch premiership unchanged.

The weekend's only fixture produced a 2-2 draw between bottom club RKC Waalwijk and MVV Maastricht.

None of the top teams have yet played a game since Dutch football's six-week winter break. Feyenoord leads the league by six points with a game in hand over second-placed Vitesse Arnhem. Ajax is third, three points behind the leaders.

C Heerenveen missed a chance to leapfrog Ajax into third, twice surrendering a lead to go down 3-2 at Willem II Tilburg.

RAUL SCORES IN FRANCE

Italy's Fabrizio Ravanelli scored twice as Olympique Marseille beat Bastia 3-1 at home to surge back to the top of the French First Division.

Marseille went two points clear of Girondins Bordeaux, which was held to a 1-1 draw at Rennes after German substitute Patrick Weiser equalized with a free kick three minutes from time.

Rennes, which fell behind to Bordeaux striker Sylvain Wiltord's 15th goal of the season in the 36th minute, dropped to fourth behind Olympique Lyon and Nantes.

Lyon came from behind to beat Nancy 2-1 at home, while Nantes beat defending champion RC Lens 2-0.

Lens had defender Eric Sikera sent off in the 51st minute for a professional foul and Nantes defender Eric Decroix was dismissed for a second yellow card on the 77th.

Struggling Paris St Germain ended a run of seven league games without victory dating back to November by beating bottom side Sochaux 2-0 at the Parc des Princes.

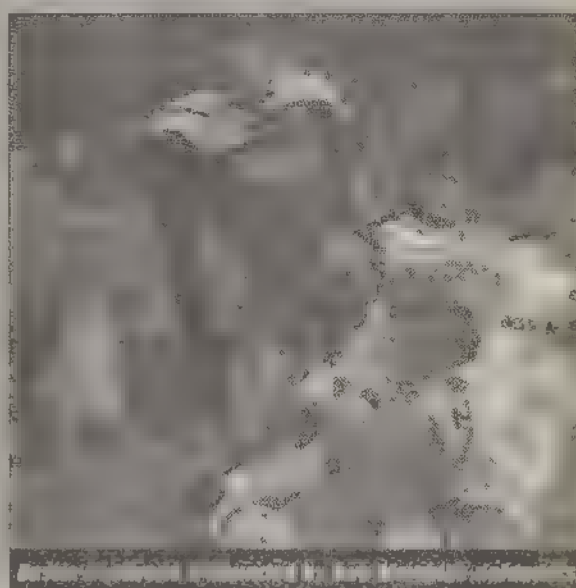
Italian coach Enzo Tosi brought Christian Vieri and Roberto Baggio into the country's most effective forwards at the World Cup but since they have been back into the team in Saturday's friendly game against Norway.

Both Vieri and Baggio have been spectacular for their Italian League clubs since recovering from different types of knee problems.

On Sunday Vieri tallied his sixth goal in as many games with second-place Lazio since returning from ligament damage that held him out of action for nearly four months.

Baggio, who has had his knee tendinitis since the World Cup, scored one goal and set up another for Inter Milan in a 5-1 rout of Empoli.

Vieri should regain his starting spot when Italy hosts Norway in Pisa on Wednesday, while Baggio will probably be on the bench with AS Roma's Francesco Totti expected to partner Vieri up front.



Vieri scored the only goal when Italy edged Norway 1-0 in the second round at the World Cup and the first goal in the friendly.

Zat gave Baggio the goal when he scored a header in the 10th minute, and set up the only goal in the 10th minute when he scored a header in the 10th minute.

Italian squad for Norway friendly

Goalkeepers: Angelo Peruzzi (Juve), Gianluigi Buffon (Par).

Defenders: Christian Panucci (Real Madrid), Fabio Cannavaro (Parma), Moreno Torricelli (Fiorentina), Gianluca Pessotto (Juve), Mark Iuliano (Juve), Alessandro Nesta (Laz), Paolo Maldini (Milan).

Midfielders: Dino Baggio (Parma), Diego Fuser (Parma), Demetrio Albertini (Milan), Jonathan Bachini (L'Espresso), Sandro Corsi (Fiorentina), Eusebio Di Francesco (Roma), Gabriele Zambrotta (Bari).

Forwards: Enrico Chiesa (Par), Roberto Baggio (Inter), Christian Vieri (Laz), Francesco Totti (Roma).

GERMANY'S DISASTER: BEATEN BY THE YANKS

Even with little on the line, few would expect the United States soccer team to beat perennial world power Germany.

Jovan Kirovski, Tony Sanneh and Claudio Reyna — all of whom play for German clubs — scored during a 10-minute span in the first half as the Americans won 3-0.

"This [game] was really important," said Kirovski, whose 16th-minute strike opened the scoring. "It was good for our confidence and shows how all the hard work paid off for us."

It was the U.S. team's first triumph over Germany four games between the nations.

Eight months earlier, the European champions pummeled the Americans 2-0 in the World Cup opener for both nations.

In addition to the World Cup, Germany won a pair of exhibition games played in the United States in 1993.

"This was a good result for us, although I am not going to make a big deal out of it," said Bruce Arena, who earned his first win as U.S. coach.

"It is a friendly in February 1999. What I am looking for is improvement in my team each time it plays."

It was the first U.S. win in seven games since a 2-0 win over Kuwait last May 24. Steve Sampson quit as coach after the Americans went 0-3 at the World Cup and finished last in the 32 nation field.

Arena, the former coach of D.C. United, began with scoreless draws against Australia and Bolivia.

"The guys were working hard for each other out there," Reyna said. "Everyone wanted the ball, everyone wanted to be involved. That's what it takes. This was a huge game."

The victory continued a series of upsets against former World Cup champions by the United States, joining victories over England (1993), Argentina (1995) and Brazil (1998). But in the World Cup, soccer's biggest stage, the Americans have struggled, going 1-8-1 in the 1990s.

For the Germans, a three-time World Cup champion,



Germany's Nerringer (dark shirt) and Reyna fight for the ball.

their two-game trip to Florida was their first action since the Bundesliga started its mid-winter break in December. The Germans were missing forward Oliver Bierhoff and two others but otherwise had their first-choice lineup.

"I think the U.S. was truly a better opponent," German coach Erich Ribbeck said. "They were more aggressive and more agile than we were."

The Americans, who mixed young players and veterans, pushed forward and controlled from start.

Kirovski, who plays for Cologne in Germany's second division, put the United States ahead when his shot from the top corner of the penalty area went into the upper corner past goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

Sanneh, who joined Bundesliga club Hertha Berlin last month after three seasons in MLS, made it 2-0 in the 24th minute. Reyna, who plays for VfL Wolfsburg, scored two minutes later.

"The goals came fast and by the time it was 2-0, I think the game was over," Ribbeck said.

The Germans, who have struggled since their quarter-final loss to Croatia at the World Cup, didn't generate a

consistent attack and created few chances.

"Everything went well for us this week in training," said German captain Lothar Matthaus, who made his 131st international appearance. "But today, it was a disaster. Everything went wrong."

The Americans were so dominant that goalkeeper Tony Meola didn't touch the ball for the first 10 minutes and didn't handle a shot off the foot of a German player for nearly the entire first half.

Meola got his 29th shutout in 89 international appearances.

The goals were the first for the United States since a 2-1 loss to Iran at the World Cup.

Government-controlled television broadcaster RAI, signed a four-year deal to broadcast soccer games involving the Italian national teams.

The final agreement, signed Friday by RAI and the Italian federation (FIGC), cost the state-controlled television group 229.5 billion lire (\$139 million).

Under the agreement, RAI will televise matches involving the "Azzurri" through 2002, as well as those of the U21, U18 and women's teams.

FIFA has asked Hungary's sports minister to reverse his decision to suspend the leadership of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ), Hungarian media reported.

Hungary's TV3 television station said FIFA president Sepp Blatter had sent a fax to sports minister Tamas Deutsch outlining his opposition to the move.

MLSZ president Attila Kovacs and his executive

committee were suspended by Deutsch on Thursday after two state investigations claimed to reveal evidence of financial mismanagement and unlawful acts within the MLSZ.

Deutsch appointed deputy state secretary Andras Bodor as a commissioner to temporarily head the MLSZ until new elections are held.

The report said Blatter continued to recognize Kovacs as the legitimate head of the federation, in line with FIFA's statutes.

Deutsch confirmed that he had received the fax from Blatter and added that he would be sending FIFA a dossier containing the findings of the investigations.

The sports minister maintained that he was acting within Hungarian law.



"I'm absolutely sure Mr. Blatter wouldn't want me to not practice the law and my given rights when, prior to my decision, there was documented and serious breaches of the law," Deutsch said.

UK

MAN UTD INC.

Manchester United have been confirmed as the world's richest club.

An international survey revealed that Old Trafford had an income of £87.9million in 1997, almost £30m more than at second-placed Barcelona.

And the success of the Premiership was reflected in the fact that four other English clubs — Newcastle, Liverpool, Tottenham and Arsenal — figure in the top 20, with Chelsea close behind.

Italy have six clubs, including Juventus and the Milan giants, in the leading 20 and salaries in Serie A still outstrip those in England, but the Premiership clubs earned £455.5m between them as against £376.8m for the Italian elite.

Richard Baldwin, of accountants and list compilers Deloitte Touche, pointed out that since the survey was taken BSKyB has made its takeover bid for United and the club's revenue would get another boost with the advent of pay-television and the increase of Old Trafford's capacity to 70,000.

He said: "They're adding 12,000 seats and it's a certainty they'll sell them out. I don't think there's a chance of anyone catching up with them in the near future."

"If clubs are allowed to sell their own broadcasting rights, the big ones will only get bigger. That will see clubs like Chelsea and Aston Villa, who are both very well run and with large supporter bases, moving up the list."

Blackburn's Scotland striker Kevin Gallacher, 32, has been ordered to rest for six weeks after undergoing a scan on the thigh injury that has forced him to miss the club's last four matches.

Manager Brian Kidd said: "The scan revealed more problems than we had anticipated. It's a real blow for Kevin."

And Blackburn's French midfielder Sebastien Perez was granted his wish of a loan return to for-



mer club Bastia until the end of the season. Perez was a £3m signing by former Rovers boss Roy Hodgson.

TABLOIDS' FIELD DAY

By Craig Wilson in London

In Britain, it is generally accepted that Tony Blair's Labour government was elected on the support of the daily newspapers.

It's a country where the press have taken on the power of judge, jury and executioner. It's hardly surprising therefore that they should be the kingmakers and breakers when it comes to the England manager's job.

Many England fans are now accusing the papers of plotting Glenn Hoddle's dismissal — another example of the dailies overstepping the mark.

"Go" said the Sun on the day of Hoddle's Football Association hearing. The largest circulation paper in the UK followed it up with the front page headline "Sack as a Parrot — Hoddle Goes".

They went on to report that the FA attempted to broker a deal with Hoddle involving him dumping guru Eileen Drewery. Hoddle refused and was on his way.

"Kev breaks our hearts" says The Sun, as Fulham boss Kevin Keegan rules himself out for the England post. They also report that caretaker boss Howard Wilkinson "will give the boot to mumbo jumbo".

The Express (the paper read by 40% of all policemen apparently) quote Hoddle's "what you sow, you shall reap" and counter that he has reaped "the whirlwind for his insulting comments on disabled people".

"[Hoddle] is a man capable of making a karma drama out of a crisis, of being over the moon and out of his tree at the same time" says columnist Martin Samuel. "His mental processes have been increasingly in orbit".

The Guardian leads with "England loses faith in Hoddle", and carries an interview with Drewery (in which she blames the press for his ousting).

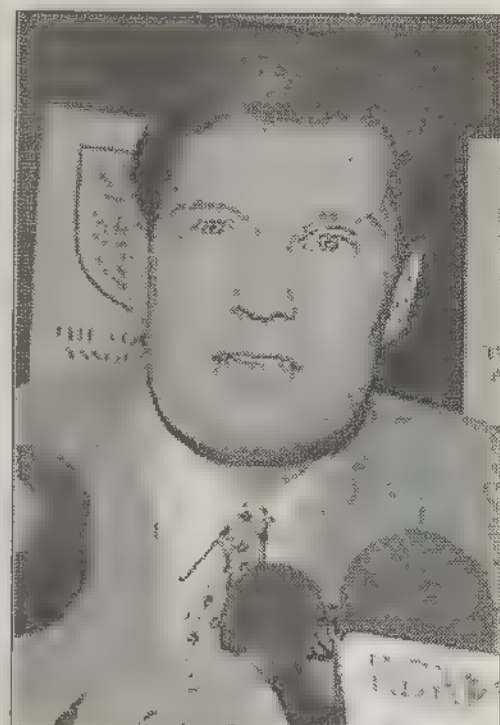
But in the Review section columnist Francis Wheen argues that Hoddle's "babblings are no more offensive than the doctrine of Original Sin, yet no one proposes that Christians be hounded from public life and forced to apologise".

He does conclude however, in a reference to Hoddle's continuing omission of Andy Cole and Matt Le Tissier, that it is his irrational football beliefs which should disqualify Hoddle from office.

London's Evening Standard carries a column by defender Gareth Southgate headlined "Hoddle sacking is last thing we need", and argues that after a poor start to England's European Championship campaign, England players will suffer due to the upheaval.

The Times on the other hand leads with the headline "£500,000 pay-off as plea to FA fails".

While many football supporters are pleased to see Hoddle ride off into the Sun-set, the general consensus



seems to be that the coach was hard done by.

"I'm not surprised he went," said Brian Wilson, an Anglican minister and long time football fan. "He had the tendency to let his mouth run away with him. But he has upset a lot of people, so I think the FA probably did the right thing".

England fan Peter Serjent (34) felt the FA was out of order in sacking Hoddle.

"They'd made a mistake in not getting rid of him when his World Cup diary was published" he said — a book which upset many with its disclosures on the private problems of Gascoigne, Beckham and Adams.

"I think the sacking is a disgrace," said Dundee supporter Stuart Robertson. "Especially with Tony Blair getting involved. Politicians have more important things to do with their time, and Hoddle's greatest crime was the record he made with Chris Waddle".

Brixton Brady, a fashion model who supports Hoddle's former club Chelsea, and typical of the new fans who have come to the game in its new media-friendly incarnation, was "horrified by the sacking. In what other profession could you be fired for your religious belief?"

"Surely it doesn't effect the way you manage a football team?"

The British press, it would seem, thought otherwise.

PREMIER STATS

Average time to concede a league goal — away

Arsenal	141
Aston Villa	108
Blackburn Rovers	55
Charlton Athletic	45
Chelsea	83
Coventry City	52
Derby County	98
Everton	52
Leeds United	60
Leicester City	98
Liverpool	72
Manchester United	76
Middlesbrough	55
Newcastle United	58
Nottingham Forest	39
Sheffield Wednesday	62
Southampton	40
Tottenham Hotspur	72
West Ham United	64
Wimbledon	45

Average time to concede a league goal — home

Arsenal	270
Aston Villa	82
Blackburn Rovers	90
Charlton Athletic	76
Chelsea	165
Coventry City	83
Derby County	110
Everton	180
Leeds United	198
Leicester City	62

Liverpool	76
Manchester United	90
Middlesbrough	108
Newcastle United	72
Nottingham Forest	76
Sheffield Wednesday	154
Southampton	51
Tottenham Hotspur	62
West Ham United	71
Wimbledon	98

● before last weekend's round



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13 PREMIER LEAGUE

ASTON VILLA v LEEDS UNITED
CHARLTON ATHLETIC v LIVERPOOL
CHELSEA v BLACKBURN ROVERS
EVERTON v MIDDLESBROUGH
LEICESTER CITY v DERBY COUNTY
MANCHESTER UNITED v ARSENAL
NEWCASTLE UNITED v COVENTRY CITY
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY v WIMBLEDON
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v SOUTHAMPTON

GLENN HODDLE PROFILE

1957	Born October 27, in Hayes, Middlesex
1974	Signed as apprentice by Tottenham.
1975	Turned professional.
1976	Scored on his full debut for Tottenham
1979	Scored on his England debut against Bulgaria.
1981	Won the F.A. Cup with Tottenham.
1982	Won his second F.A. Cup medal in two years scoring in both the drawn final against Queens Park Rangers and the match-winning penalty in the replay.
	Was a runner up in the League Cup final
1987	Played his last match for Tottenham in the F.A. Cup final which Tottenham lost 3-2 to Coventry City.
	Moved to French side Monaco for 750,000 pounds (US\$1.23 million).
1988	Under current Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger, won the French First Division title with Monaco.
	Collected the last of his 53 caps with England
1991	Joined Chelsea as a non-contract player after a brief injury-enforced retirement.
	Joined Swindon as player-manager.
1993	Scored in the Division One play-off final as Swindon reach the premier league.
1994	Returned to Chelsea as player-manager.
	Reached final of the F.A. Cup with Chelsea but lost 4-0 to Manchester United.
1995	Made final appearance for Chelsea.
1996	Succeeded Terry Venables as England coach after Euro '96.

1997 England qualifies for the 1998 World Cup in France following a 0-0 draw with Italy in Rome.

1998 May, leaves Paul Gascoigne out of the England squad. June, England lose in the second round of the World Cup to Argentina on penalties. Hoddle insists the only mistake he made at the World Cup was in not bringing faith healer Eileen Drewery to France. August, his "World Cup Diaries" are published, causing controversy and consternation. Leading figures accuse him of betraying his players after the book reveals incidents including Gascoigne's reaction at being dropped from the squad. October, controversy continues to plague Hoddle after an alleged row between the coach and striker Alan Shearer over the team's tactics in a 3-0 win over Luxembourg.

1999 Jan. 30, Hoddle hit with widespread criticism following alleged remarks he made about disabled people. He was quoted in the Times news paper as saying disabled people were paying for sins in previous life. Feb. 2, sacked as England coach by the F.A.

UK

'DIVING' REFEREE RETURNS

Referee Paul Alcock made his senior return after the infamous push by Paolo Di Canio and was floored again, thankfully only verbally this time.

Bournemouth midfielder John Batley took a pop at Alcock after feeling he had helped contribute to their 3-1 defeat at Barnsley.

"Maybe he was under pressure because there were probably a few people in the stand watching his performance rather than the game," said Batley.

"I thought he had a very bad game and bottled it a bit. Their player-manager (John Hendrie) was going down for anything but the referee wasn't saying anything to him.

"He let them get away with a lot and we couldn't even talk to him." Alcock needed surgery on a damaged disc, after trying to struggle on for a few weeks with back pain, in the wake of that eventful September match between Di Canio's Sheffield Wednesday and Arsenal.

Despite Batley's criticisms, Alcock made his return to action without too much controversy.

He booked five — including Bournemouth goalkeeper Mark Ovendale on the final whistle for complaining about his decisions — but this was a Cup-tie that rarely flickered, let alone explode.

"He made a couple of dodgy decisions but I've never played in

a game when you don't get some," observed social philosopher Hignett.

Argentine trialists Gaston Fernando Pezzuti and Carlos Maximiliano Estevez returned home after only two days at Liverpool.

The pair from Racing Club were due to spend 10 days at Liverpool but club spokesman Ian Cotton said, diplomatically, they had flown back to Argentina because their trial had been "unsuccessful."

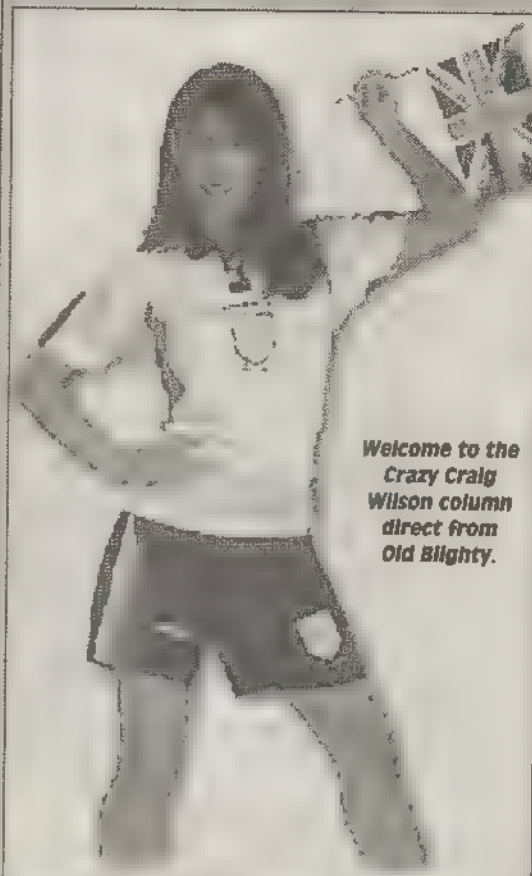
Newcastle United have agreed to sign Croatia Zagreb midfielder Silvio Maric for 10 million German marks Croatia board member Suad Rizvanbegovic said.

He announced the transfer after holding talks with Newcastle president Freddy Shepherd. The deal is subject to a medical.

"We have been watching Silvio Maric for three years, we have been monitoring his progress, and we are very happy today to be here to sign him because he will be a valuable member of the Newcastle squad alongside Alan Shearer," Shepherd said.

Personal terms have already been agreed with the player but no details were disclosed. Croatian media reported Maric would be paid some 20,000 pounds a week during a 3-1/2-year contract.

'CRAZY' CRAIG WILSON'S UK



When, at the end of this season, Steve MacManusman leaves Liverpool for Real Madrid and £15 million, he'll be completing a journey which started one muddy Sunday morning on a badly drained pitch in Cheshire.

At that time, Macca was just another wannabe, playing for Pacific — with and against the unfit, the unwell, the overweight, and the unsobber.

Around 1.5 million men and women play football every weekend in Britain, and from their ranks have emerged Stuart Pearce, Chris Waddle, Jason McAteer, Chris Armstrong and Peter Beardsley.

Ian Wright was an apprentice plasterer playing in the London

and Kent Border League when he was spotted by Crystal Palace.

But while some may dream of the big time, few actually make it, and the vast majority see the Sunday morning match as an opportunity to work off a hangover, enjoy the company of their mates, and taste just the tiniest piece of glory.

Pete May is Britain's foremost expert on Sunday football, a bloke who has donned the anorak at every recreation ground in the UK, often as the sole spectator. How did that come about?

"The Football Association publish a magazine, called FC, which goes out to all affiliated clubs, and usually features articles about fitness, or kits. But they started asking me for articles about how to play with a hangover, and about clubs with stupid names. For instance the London Relegation League has clubs called Brixton Monchengladbach, Who Dares Wednesday, and Real Ale Madrid.

There are also PSV Hangover, Charlton Aesthetic, and a women's team called Old Fallopians."

So who plays for these teams? "There's quite a cross section of people" says May. Stockbrokers, journalists, coal miners, cab drivers. It's a bit of a refuge — an opportunity for blokes who are normally politically correct to go mad. One team I know, the Windy Millers, I describe as the oldest adolescents in town. They're a social club really.

"They have photo albums going back ten or fifteen years, a complete history of the club. They have a bar, they do the Thunderbirds walk as their goal celebration, they have end of season trips. They are very well organised."

So it's still quite blokey then? "Oh yeah. There was a Christian team who played in one of the leagues. They had 'John 3:16' on their jerseys, and went into a half-time prayer. But they often got a player sent off for punching the referee."

It's the policing of the amateur game which is a problem. "Being a ref is a completely thankless task. They only get about fifteen quid, and a lot of verbal abuse. But the best refs know how to deal with it. One ref told me that a player called him a wanker, and later the same bloke missed a penalty. 'Who's the wanker now?' the ref shouted.

"It's linesmen they have trouble with. You can never get them. It's always the sub running the line, although one team I watched had their striker sent off and he was the linesman in the second half," he remembers. "Apparently the worse games to referee are those between referees' teams. They dispute every decision." No doubt quoting FIFA directives at each other.

Is there a directive on drinking? There must be. At Hackney Marshes, home to over a hundred Sunday league pitches, May has seen these athletes training on a diet of tinnies before during and after the game.

It's not unusual for players to be sick on the pitch or in the first aid bucket, and May recalls a striker putting one past a goalie who was otherwise occupied throwing up in the back of the net!

May has now compiled his tales into a book called Sunday Muddy Sunday (Virgin). It's a wonder these teams don't come looking for you I say.

He hardly paints a pretty picture. "I've had no adverse reaction" he answers. "These guys are only too happy to talk to you — unlike the professionals, who hate journalists. These blokes are proud of their exploits. They don't mind what you write!"



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Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

SCOTS MAD ABOUT LARSSON

Celtic coach Josef Venglos hailed Henrik Larsson as one of Europe's best players after the striker ripped Hearts apart with a hat-trick.

The Scottish premier league champions cut the deficit on leaders Rangers to 10 points thanks to the Swedish international, who took his goal tally to 24 this season with the one-man demolition at Parkhead in front of 59,815 supporters.

Celtic have already turned down a 4.0 million pounds offer from Sheffield United for Larsson and Venglos declared: "Henrik is one of the best players in Europe right now."

"I have worked with players such as Paulo Futre and David Platt, and Larsson is in that quality. He has such vision and control."

Larsson scored two goals within four minutes, a left foot shot in the 21st and a header from Lubomir Moravcik's corner in the 25th minute before adding a 65th minute penalty after Phil O'Donnell was brought down.

Hearts, one of the pre-season title hopefuls, have slumped to eighth with 24 points from 24 games.

Kilmarnock went down 2-1 at Aberdeen, for whom new signing Andreas Mayer scored the winner with a 47th-minute header after Eoin Jess had put Aberdeen in front three minutes earlier.

Alan Mahood pulled one back in the 66th minute but it failed to inspire a fightback.

Dundee, who had asked for their home game with Motherwell to be postponed because of a flu epidemic which claimed 10 players, managed to win 1-0 to move onto 27 points.

The winner came from Steven Tweed's header in the second minute but the after effects of the flu virus forced the defender to remain in the dressing room for the second half.

Fourth placed St Johnstone defeated Dundee United 1-0 at home thanks to a 10th minute penalty from Gary Bofian to move onto 36 points.

Question marks were being raised over Hearts' David Weir's possible move to Liverpool, only 24 hours after it looked like the player was on his way to the Merseyside club.

Weir is still likely to travel to Liverpool next week for talks, but reports from Merseyside suggest it is unlikely the club will sign him straight away.

However his agent, Bill McMurdo, criticised such suggestions, claiming that Weir could sign for the club next week and had heard of no such second-thoughts from the Liverpool management.

McMurdo said: "People I respect at Liverpool have

told me that if they want to buy David they will pay money for him now."

Chief executive Chris Robinson will give Jefferies money to strengthen his squad if defender David Weir does join Liverpool.

Last night Robinson said: "Liverpool are keen to have David down for talks. That will happen next week and could be with a view to a permanent transfer. That would give Jim a chance to invest in his squad."

As Weir's future looked uncertain, striker Stephane Adam said he would decide at the beginning of next week over whether to stay at Tynecastle.

The player said there "was always the possibility" he would stay with Hearts, but made it clear he would take the weekend to make up his mind.

Meanwhile, Dunfermline have failed in their bold bid to bring Republic of Ireland international Alan Maybury to the club on a loan in time for last Sunday's televised match with Rangers.

Maybury, 20, was a regular in the Leeds United side last season but lost his place to fellow Irishman, Gary Kelly, and has not started a first-team game this campaign.

However an injury to Kelly, which will keep him out for around a month, has meant Leeds manager David O'Leary has changed his mind over allowing Maybury to come north.

Dunfermline's Andy Tod insists speculation about his future will be put on the backburner until the end of the season. The defender has been linked with a move to Dundee United when his contract runs out this summer.

USA international Mike Burns is praying he's done enough to win himself a long-term deal with Hearts.

Burns played in a closed-door game against Dundee United on Wednesday and will hold talks with Tynecastle manager Jim Jefferies.

Aberdeen are ready to sign Franck Renou if the French midfielder impresses during a trial match for the club this week.

Pittodrie manager Paul Hegarty has been pleased with what he has seen from the £200,000-rated Lille player during training last week. However, the tiny winger will have to prove he is up to the physical demands of the Scottish game before Aberdeen part with the money and Hegarty is trying to get international clearance for the 25-year-old to turn out as an over-age player in Monday's youth league match against Celtic.

SELFISH LEEDS AT IT AGAIN: THIS TIME IT'S IRELAND



Harry Kewell at training ... Leeds is now putting pressure on young Irishman Steven McPhail not to play for his country.

Leeds are on the brink of another club versus country row following Stephen McPhail's call-up to the Republic of Ireland squad for the U20 World Cup in April.

Only recently, chairman Peter Ridsdale and manager David O'Leary were up in arms when they thought Jonathon Woodgate and Alan Smith would be selected for the same tournament.

United, however, were let off the hook when Football Association technical director and now England caretaker boss Howard Wilkinson announced first team regulars would not be included.

Leeds have also had problems in the past with regard to skipper Lucas Radebe and Harry Kewell and their international commitments with South Africa and Australia respectively.

Last season, then manager George Graham became embroiled in two separate rows with both the South African and Australian Football Associations.

This season, 19-year-old McPhail has played his part in Leeds' drive for a top six finish, and with it the hoped-for possibility of playing in the UEFA Cup again next term.

McPhail has been named in a provisional squad of 35 for the Cup which takes place in Nigeria in April, and if chosen for the final 20, would miss at least four Premiership matches.

But Leeds have vowed to do all they can to prevent McPhail, who has missed the last two matches with a knee injury which also rules him out of today's home game with Newcastle, from taking part.

Club secretary Ian Silvester said: "It's something we will be looking into. The club will be making efforts to keep Stephen in this country as he is a valuable member of our first team squad."

It leaves McPhail unsure as to his plans in April. He said: "I got the letter the day before yesterday about the U20s."

"The Irish FA are adamant they are taking me because they want as strong a squad as possible."

"If I can get fit again here I don't know what will happen and if the club will battle to keep me here."

"I'm not really pushed because I know whatever happens it's going to be good, whether I'm playing here or in Nigeria."

"But I've been talking to the doctor about the injections, and I'm told it's next Tuesday (today) when I'm getting them done."

"There's about eight all told. I'm not really into injections, but it's something that's got to be done if I'm going."

It's the latest blow for O'Leary, who has already had to battle with a severely depleted squad over the last few months due to a series of serious injuries and suspensions.

Fulham fans had to pass a trivia test before they could buy tickets for the F.A. Cup fifth-round match against Manchester United at Old Trafford this weekend.

Second division Fulham quizzed fans about their club to ensure tickets for their biggest match in years went to genuine supporters.

A club spokesman said: "They would ask the person buying the ticket something like who scored for Fulham last week or another question only a real fan would know the answer to, as we wanted to make sure genuine supporters got tickets."

"We even had two people turn up in Manchester United shirts. And, of course, they were politely turned away."

Fulham, which is currently on top of the second division, has knocked out Premier League clubs Southampton and Aston Villa en route to the last 16 — the first time it has been this far since reaching the F.A. Cup final in 1975.

WALES' IAN RUSH: THIS COULD BE THE END FOR ME

It's at times like these football managers learn their keep. Both Newry Town and Cliftonville suffered heart-breaking defeats during last week and managers Harry Fay and Marty Quinn admit team morale in the respective camps is at a low ebb, reports the Irish Times.

Quinn's Cliftonville side lost by 2-0 to Glentoran on Tuesday night in the County Antrim Shield final, while Newry let a two-goal lead slip against Crusaders on Monday and were subsequently dumped out of the Bass Irish Cup in extra time.

Quinn said: "To be honest the lads were a bit down at training on Thursday night as you can imagine, but it's my job to get the side up."

"Newry, I suppose, will be in a similar position to ourselves after their demoralising defeat by Crusaders mid-week."

Quinn revealed yesterday he had agreed terms with 30-year-old Fintan McConville who has been training with the side in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, down at the Showgrounds, joint manager Harry Fay seemed to be still reeling from his side's Irish Cup exit.

Fay said: "We threw it away. Football can be a cruel game sometimes, never more so than on Monday night."

To compound Fay's misery, goalkeeper Paul Stranney is a doubt for the Co Down

side with an ear infection.

Newry and Cliftonville's mid-season blips pale into insignificance when one considers Roy McCreedie's predicament at St Julian's Road.

Omagh Town, is a club in turmoil and the unfolding off-the-field problems have affected McCreedie's young side.

"A win would obviously be a welcome boost and we would have to try and work on that, but realistically it's unlikely," conceded the Omagh manager just before taking the field last weekend.

While it all seems so depressing around the Irish League these days, life couldn't be better for Roy Coyle and his Glentoran side.

Fresh from their Co Antrim Shield success, Glentoran entertained Alan Fraser's Ballymena at the Oval.

In their last meeting on December 22, Andy Kirk scored the only goal of the game and the club was looking forward to repeating this success.

The Wrexham press are now speculating on the future of one of Wales' greats. The evergreen 37-year-old Ian Rush admitted to local media: "I'm not getting any younger — and it's not getting any easier."

Rush began his illustrious career at Chester City 20 years ago and is now keen to get into management.

He is player-coach at Wrexham where he runs the reserves with another ex-Liverpool lad, Joey Jones (remember him?).

"I've now got my full FA coaching badge and I enjoy that side of the game. I hope that will eventually lead to a job in football management."

But Rush wants to see out his playing contract at Wrexham this season.

"I was asked at Huddersfield the other night if that was my last FA Cup-tie," he said. "I said it could be because the next time I would get a chance of playing in the competition was 12 months' down the line."

"A lot of things can happen in 12 months, especially in football. There is a chance I might finish, but it's something I've obviously got to give a lot of thought to."

"I want to carry on playing as long as I can. Football is my life and you can't just boot it into touch just like that."

"What is also important is whatever decision I make has got to be for the best of everyone. In my position it's easier if you are scoring goals — but I've still not yet scored for Wrexham."

"It gets harder as you get older because your reactions are obviously not what they were. Injuries also take a little longer to get over and all these things come into the equation."

"Obviously it would be a big wrench for

me to finish playing. But that's something every player has to face some day."

"I still love pulling on the boots — but it can't last for ever. I have always given my best to the game, whether it's in a big game or in training. That's the way I am and I'll never change on that score."

"I'm now actively involved with helping the young lads at Wrexham and I enjoy that very much. But I'm out sometimes three nights a week watching games. Sometimes that's not the best preparation when you're still playing."

Rush, however, has pledged himself to Wrexham's relegation battle.

"That's the most important thing," he said. "We want to stay up and anything I can do towards that aim I will do."

Wrexham manager Brian Flynn said: "It's for Ian to decide when he has had enough. But from our point of view his input into our club has been invaluable."

Rush, however, will one day follow his close friend Kevin Ratcliffe into management. 'Rats' is now on the ladder to bigger things.

This week he is involved as a coach with the Wales B squad for the game against Northern Ireland at The Racecourse (7.30pm).

Compiled by and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

Premier League highlights

ASTON VILLA V BLACKBURN

Aston Villa's title challenge suffered a severe setback at Villa Park on Saturday as Brian Kidd's visiting Blackburn Rovers clinched their first away win of the campaign with a 3-1 victory.

Villa settled first, with fit-again Dion Dublin and Julian Joachim linking up well in attack. However, while the home side dominated territorially for long periods, they could not fashion many clear goalscoring opportunities.

After 22 minutes, Blackburn goalkeeper John Filan did well to deny Joachim with his feet after Ian Taylor's flick had given the striker a sight of goal, and minutes later he clung onto a long-range effort from Paul Merson.

Blackburn then stunned the home support with the opening goal after 32 minutes, courtesy of a Gareth Southgate blunder.

Michael Oakes had started to come out for a right-wing cross from David Dunn, but as Southgate attempted to intercept he only succeeded in sending a powerful header into his own net.

Villa tried to retaliate, Rovers defender Marlon Broomes forced to block a fierce goal-bound effort from former Ewood Park player Alan Wright. In the

49th minute, Dublin clipped the crossbar with a half-volley after a Steve Watson's shot had been blocked by Broomes.

Blackburn then took a firm grip on proceedings with two goals in two minutes from Ashley Ward and Dunn. Chris Sutton set up the crucial second in the 62nd minute when he broke down the left flank and held off the challenge of Riccardo Scimeca.

His low centre landed invitingly in the path of Ward who crashed home his first goal since a \$12 million move from Barnsley.

Two minutes later, the game looked effectively over as Blackburn struck again with another move stemming from the left flank. This time Matt Jansen supplied the cross, and although Gareth Barry headed half-clear, Dunn was on hand to hammer home a close-range volley.

Villa gave themselves a ray of hope after 69 minutes when Joachim took a flick from Dublin into his stride and gave Filan no chance with an arrow-like drive from just inside the area.

Blackburn maintained their lead though, leaving John Gregory with a minor crisis as he saw his side slip out of the top three on the table.

LEICESTER V SHEFF. WEDNESDAY

Sheffield Wednesday produced a fine performance on Saturday to secure a 2-0 victory over Leicester City at Filbert Street.

The opening minutes were scrappy, but Wednesday soon clicked into gear with Italian Benito Carbone their inspiration. He started and finished the best move of the opening period, forcing a reflex save from Leicester goalkeeper Kasey Keller after good work from Wim Jonk and Petter Rudi.

The City keeper was back in action before the interval to deny Andy Booth from close-range after Rudi touched on Andy Hinchcliffe's cross. The Leicester keeper undid all his good first-half work, however, with a blunder after the break.

Niclas Alexandersson picked out Booth and his weak header was spilled by Keller straight onto the head of Jonk who gratefully nodded the ball over the line.

Leicester responded positively. Impey hit the by-line and crossed perfectly for Matt Elliott but the defender misdirected his header. The Owls defence endured further pressure as O'Neill threw on new signing Arnar Gunnlaugsson on for his debut in the 57th minute.

Leicester could not break through however, as the superb Emerson Thome and Des Walker stifled their attacks.

Carbone made the game safe 12 minutes from time. Alexandersson's pass from the right was dummied by Jonk and the Italian crashed home his seventh goal of the season with a first-time shot.



MAN. UTD V NOTT. FOREST

Manchester United produced a stunning performance at the City Ground on Saturday, obliterating Ron Atkinson's Nottingham Forest 8-1 with a display of awesome offensive power.

United shrugged aside a difficult pitch as they moved quickly into top gear, in-form striker Dwight Yorke putting them in front after just two minutes.

Roy Keane retrieved a wayward corner and played the ball into the path of Paul Scholes. The midfielder sent over a cross from the right and Yorke sidefooted past Forest goalkeeper Dave Beasant from eight yards.

The situation looked ominous for the bottom club, but they shocked United with an equaliser just four minutes later. Some neat interplay between Alan Rogers and Jean-Claude Darcheville ended with Rogers slotting home past Peter Schmeichel.

Forest's joy proved short lived however, as the second member of United's deadly striking duo made his mark. Andy Cole, recalled to the England squad last week, used his blistering pace as he beat Dave Beasant to Jaap Stam's long pass before rounding the goalkeeper and finishing from an acute angle.

More good work from Darcheville and Rogers set up van Hooijdonk after 12 minutes, but Schmeichel saved and United proceeded to take control. The visitors looked capable of scoring every time they attacked, and Cole might have had a hatful of goals before the break if not for the superb form of Beasant.

After 15 minutes Forest had a narrow escape when both Yorke and Cole went close from a corner, Scot Gemmell clearing off the line and Beasant holding on as Cole followed up with a second effort.

United were rampant by now and a minute later Yorke met a teasing Jesper Blomqvist cross, but Beasant managed to hold the looping header.

After 26 minutes, Cole did well to control a long ball on his chest, but steered his final effort just wide as he played it across goal.

Three minutes later, Scholes put Cole through on goal again, but this time Beasant anticipated well and was off his line quickly to smother the shot.

A minute before half-time, United's passing unhinged the Forest defence yet again, but again Beasant came off his line to halt Cole in full flight.

Alex Ferguson might have expected a more sizeable lead at the interval, but the floodgates opened up in the second half.

Scholes drove against the upright from 20 yards just after the restart, and a minute later the visitors secured the third goal they had threatened for so long.

Confusion in the Forest defence saw the ball fall for Yorke who drove in a low shot from 18 yards. Beasant could not hold on and Cole pounced to stab home the rebound.

To their credit, Forest continued to press for a goal, and both Dougie Freedman and Andy Johnson went close.

However, the gaps were beginning to open up in the Forest rearguard and United exposed them ruthlessly. A left-wing surge from Blomqvist just on the hour saw him cut the ball back from the goal line. When his cross hit Jon Hjelde and rebounded against the post, Yorke was

left to finish from one yard.

Forest continued to press forward, Schmeichel forced to save from Rogers, but when Alex Ferguson removed Dwight Yorke and replaced him with the prolific Ole Gunnar Solskjaer the problems multiplied for the home side.

With ten minutes to play, Solskjaer knocked in Gary Neville's low right-wing cross for United's fifth. With the game clearly now over as a contest, Solskjaer took the opportunity to stake his claim for a berth in the starting lineup.

Three minutes from time the Norwegian saw his attempted lob charged down by Beasant on the edge of the Forest area, but he reacted first to the rebound and drilled a rising shot into the top corner.



Forest's Harkes and Stone with the Red Devils' Blomqvist.

LEEDS UTD V NEWCASTLE UTD

Newcastle United clinched their first away win for five months with a 1-0 victory over Leeds United at Elland Road on Saturday as Ruud Gullit's side continued to ease clear of the relegation dogfight.

The demands of the premiership are beginning to take their toll on David O'Leary's young side. After last week's 3-0 hammering at Southampton, the Leeds manager demanded that his players immediately rekindle the form which had led to widespread praise in recent months.

It never materialised however, and an ordinary looking Newcastle can count themselves fortunate to have come away with full points.

Both sides missed the power, skill and running off the ball of their main strikers as Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Alan Shearer endured one-match bans.

Leeds looked disjointed, only occasionally showing glimpses of what they have produced to such devastating effect this season.

Newcastle should have had the lead in the 33rd minute when Jonathon Woodgate played a woeful backpass. Temuri Ketsbaia intercepted with ease, but England international goalkeeper Nigel Martyn showed his class by diving at full stretch to take the ball off the toes of the Georgian.

Leeds had their moments, in particular through Lee Bowyer. His link-up play with David Hopkin in the midfield was a highlight, while a volley and then a half-volley tested Shay Given.

Australian international Harry Kewell knocked a raking free-kick from Ian Harte across the face of goal and Clyde Wijnhard only just failed to turn the ball home.



Shaven-headed Harry Kewell with Newcastle's Dieter Hamann.

The goal eventually arrived in the 63rd minute with a 12-yard right-foot Nolberto Solano strike following good work from Ketsbaia and Dietmar Hamann.

The closest Leeds came to the equaliser was in the 87th minute when Kewell viciously curled a left-foot shot against the base of Given's right-hand post.

O'Leary now faces the first real test of his short managerial career, while Gullit can at last take heart in a run of positive results.

WEST HAM V ARSENAL

Arsenal turned in an ominous performance at Upton Park on Saturday, defeating West Ham United 4-0 and demonstrating that they are intent on retaining their premiership title.

Arsenal's early threats came through a deflected shot from Ray Parlour, blocked by goalkeeper Shaka Hislop, and two shots off target by Nicolas Anelka.

After soaking up some early Hammers pressure, Arsenal took control in midfield through Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit.

They should have secured the lead when Marc Overmars rounded Hislop and shot goalwards from a tight angle, but full-back Tim Breacker slid in to clear off the line.

However, there was no stopping Dennis Bergkamp on 34 minutes.

Picking up the ball just inside the West Ham half, the Dutchman glided effortlessly towards goal, shaking off an attempted trip by Marc-Vivien Foe and guiding a well-struck shot inside the post from 20 yards out.

West Ham failed to heed the warning signs,

continuing to allow Arsenal space in midfield.

Just before the break, after another flowing move involving Bergkamp and Parlour, Overmars was left in space just 10 yards out.

Hislop did well to block his initial effort, but the Dutch winger made no mistake with the follow-up and the ball sneaked inside the upright.

The Hammers introduced creative midfielder Eyal Berkovic after the break for full-back Breacker. The Israeli international made an immediate impact, forcing David Seaman to tip a forceful shot over the bar, but his team-mates were simply unable to match his example.

By the final stages, the home side were tiring visibly and Arsenal took full advantage.

First Anelka, who last scored a premiership goal in November, twisted and turned inside the penalty area on 82 minutes to leave Ian Pearce and Rio Ferdinand in his wake before shooting home.

Then, with just four minutes left, Parlour rounded off the scoring as he knocked home the rebound after Pearce blocked an Overmars shot on the line.

Compiled and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

Premier League highlights

CHELSEA V SOUTHAMPTON

Chelsea defeated struggling Southampton 1-0 at Stamford Bridge on Saturday, re-establishing their title challenge following last weekend's reverse at the hands of Arsenal.

The Blues started brightly as they aimed to close the gap on Manchester United. Mikael Forssell, the 17-year-old Finnish teenager, tried his luck from long range early on but failed to find the target.

Captain Dennis Wise then saw his left-foot volley saved by David Jones before Italian international Gianfranco Zola opened the scoring with an 11th minute free kick.

Chelsea's best player on the day, Zola saw one free-kick go straight into the wall but within seconds was presented with a second opportunity in an almost identical position after a foul by Saints new boy Chris Marsden.

This time he made no mistake, curling a right-foot shot past Jones and into the far corner.

With Southampton conceding seven on their last away trip a few more goals looked likely, but a swirling wind and bumpy Stamford Bridge surface made life difficult for both sides.

Jody Morris saw his attempted chip float over the bar while Dan Petrescu was just inches away from connecting with Zola's inswinging far-post cross just before the interval.

The quality of football failed to improve after the

break as neither team managed to take control of an overcrowded midfield.

A typical Mark Hughes volley flashed over the crossbar and Frank Leboeuf did the same at the other end after latching on to another Zola free-kick.

Southampton went close to an equaliser just after the hour as Egil Olsenstad muscled his way past a casual Marcel Desailly on the touchline and advanced into the area. He rounded Leboeuf and made space for the shot but his effort was too close to Ed De Goey, who saved comfortably.

The Chelsea fans began to grow anxious as their single goal cushion suddenly looked insufficient.

The home side retaliated and Wise should have calmed the nerves on 65 minutes when Celestine Babayaro's pass sent Zola clear to pull the ball back across goal. The Chelsea skipper misjudged

his shot however, and saw it travel wide.

That proved to be the final clear opportunity. Olsenstad was flagged offside when through on goal but saw his effort smothered anyway and Chelsea clung on for an unconvincing win.

Saints manager David Jones will be concerned after seeing Hughes stretchered off late in the game, knowing that he can ill afford to lose key players for the struggle that lies ahead.



LIVERPOOL V M'BROUGH

Liverpool are back on the winning track after their 3-1 defeat of Middlesbrough at Anfield on Saturday.

Michael Owen opened the scoring after just nine minutes, finishing off Robbie Fowler's overhead effort from inches out.

Middlesbrough responded well, Paul Gascoigne producing an array of flicks and backheels, but did not seem to possess the invention required to break down the Liverpool defence.

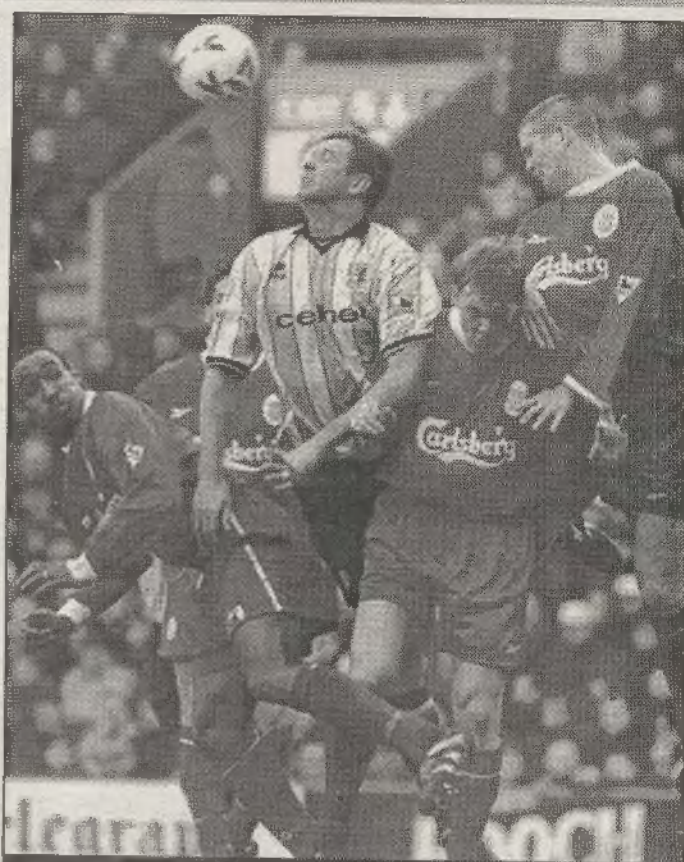
The visitors were punished for failing to take advantage of their period of dominance, shattered by two goals in two minutes before the break.

First, Jamie Redknapp sent Stig Bjornebye clear down the Liverpool left. The Norwegian's cross found fellow countryman Vegard Heggem coming in from the right, and he lifted a superb shot into the top corner.

Sixty seconds later Liverpool scored their third when Owen touched the ball into Ince's path for the captain to drill the ball low past Schwarzer.

Middlesbrough lifted their game after the break, and were almost presented with a goal after 58 minutes when a clearance from Liverpool goalkeeper David James cannoned back off Brian Deane and almost crept in at the far post.

Any prospect of a flood of goals from the home team vanished on 64 minutes with the dismissal of Dominic Matteo for bringing down Mikkel Beck as he raced clear.



Big Gary Pallister (c) of Boro surrounded by Liverpool players.

With 10 minutes left Gerard Houllier took off his strike force of Owen and Fowler, maybe mindful of their England involvement next week, and replaced them with Karlheinz Riedle and Steve Gerrard.

Five minutes from time, Boro substitute Phil Stamp fired in a rebound after Colin Cooper's effort had hit a post, but it was too little too late and Liverpool held on for the win by virtue of their first half superiority.

DERBY COUNTY V EVERTON

Jamaican international Deon Burton scored twice in the second half to give Derby County a 2-1 home win in their premier league clash with Everton.

Goal-shy Everton had taken the lead in the 38th minute with their first league goal -- more than six hours of play.

It was made by the run of 18-year-old Francis Jeffers, with Nick Barmby pinching the ball off the youngster's toe to fire in his first league goal for more than a year.

Derby equalised six minutes after the break when Everton defender Richard Dunn was accidentally tripped by Burton, leaving the striker free to poke the ball in from close range.

Derby had the best of things from then on and scored the winner five minutes from time.

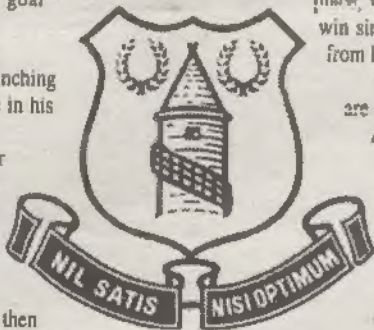
Everton keeper Thomas Myhre brilliantly saved a point-blank header by Paolo Wanchope but was still recovering as Burton climbed highest to head in the loose ball.

The win lifted Derby up to sixth place, while Everton, without a league win since December 12, remain fourth from bottom.

United have 50 points, Chelsea are on 46 with a game in hand while Arsenal won 4-0 at West Ham to move up to third, a further point back. Aston Villa dropped to fourth after losing 3-1 at home to Blackburn Rovers.

The weekend's programme was completed last night when Charlton Athletic host

Wimbledon (after Soccer Weekly went to press).



PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE

Up to and including Sunday, February 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Manchester Utd	25	9	3	1	32	13	5	5	2	27	14	50	32
Chelsea	24	8	4	0	18	6	4	6	2	17	13	46	16
Arsenal	24	8	5	0	16	4	5	4	3	12	7	45	17
Aston Villa	24	8	2	2	23	15	4	5	3	13	10	43	11
Liverpool	24	7	3	2	31	14	4	2	6	16	15	38	18
Derby County	25	5	5	2	13	10	4	5	4	12	12	37	3
Leeds United	24	7	3	2	20	6	2	6	4	16	18	36	12
Wimbledon	23	7	4	1	18	11	2	4	5	11	22	35	-4
West Ham United	24	6	3	3	16	18	3	3	6	9	17	33	-10
Middlesbrough	24	4	7	1	16	10	3	4	5	17	21	32	2
Tottenham Hotspur	24	5	5	2	19	16	2	5	5	10	15	31	-2
Newcastle United	24	6	2	4	16	15	2	5	5	13	17	31	-3
Leicester City	24	5	3	4	17	18	2	6	4	8	11	30	-4
Sheffield Wed.	24	5	3	4	13	7	3	2	7	14	16	29	4
Blackburn Rovers	24	5	3	4	14	12	1	4	7	11	19	25	-6
Coventry City	24	5	4	3	17	13	1	2	9	6	19	24	-9
Everton	24	2	7	3	3	6	3	2	7	11	21	24	-13
Southampton	24	4	2	6	18	21	1	3	8	5	26	20	-24
Charlton Athletic	24	2	4	5	15	13	1	4	7	11	24	17	-11
Nottingham Forest	24	1	6	5	10	21	2	1	9	10	28	16	-29

TOTTENHAM V COVENTRY

Coventry and Tottenham battled to a goalless draw at White Hart Lane on Saturday, with Spurs having only themselves to blame for not securing full points from the encounter as they failed to convert their dominance into goals.

The home side fashioned numerous chances in the opening period. Coventry goalkeeper Magnus Hedman blocked a Les Ferdinand cross-shot and then turned Andy Sinton's effort over the bar.

When Darren Anderton's half-volley from 20 yards finally left the goalkeeper helpless, it bounced away off a post.

Coventry did manage to create a few opportunities of their own, Darren Huckerby denied by Ian Walker's outstretched legs.

Iversen's first touch let him down when Anderton fed him inside the box and Ferdinand shot across the face of goal following Steve Carr's neat cross.

Iversen and Nielsen then both somehow failed to make contact with Anderton's left-wing delivery, having only Hedman to beat.

Deep in first-half stoppage time Sinton crashed the

ball against the underside of the bar and Sol Campbell, with his back to goal, hooked the rebound over.

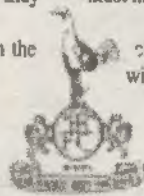
Two even narrower escapes early in the second half must have convinced Coventry it was to be their day.

Ferdinand brilliantly outmanoeuvred two challengers in the area only to drag his shot inches wide of the far post.

Then the hapless Iversen swept the ball over the bar when unmarked at the far post on the end of Freund's cross.

Sky Blues boss Gordon Strachan sensed that he had to shore up his defence and called for new signing, Bosnian Mohammed Konjic, to replace Paul Williams in the 53rd minute.

As Coventry held out, their debutant did enough to promise he will soon become a firm favourite at Highfield Road, even if Tottenham's lack of cutting edge gave him a comfortable start.



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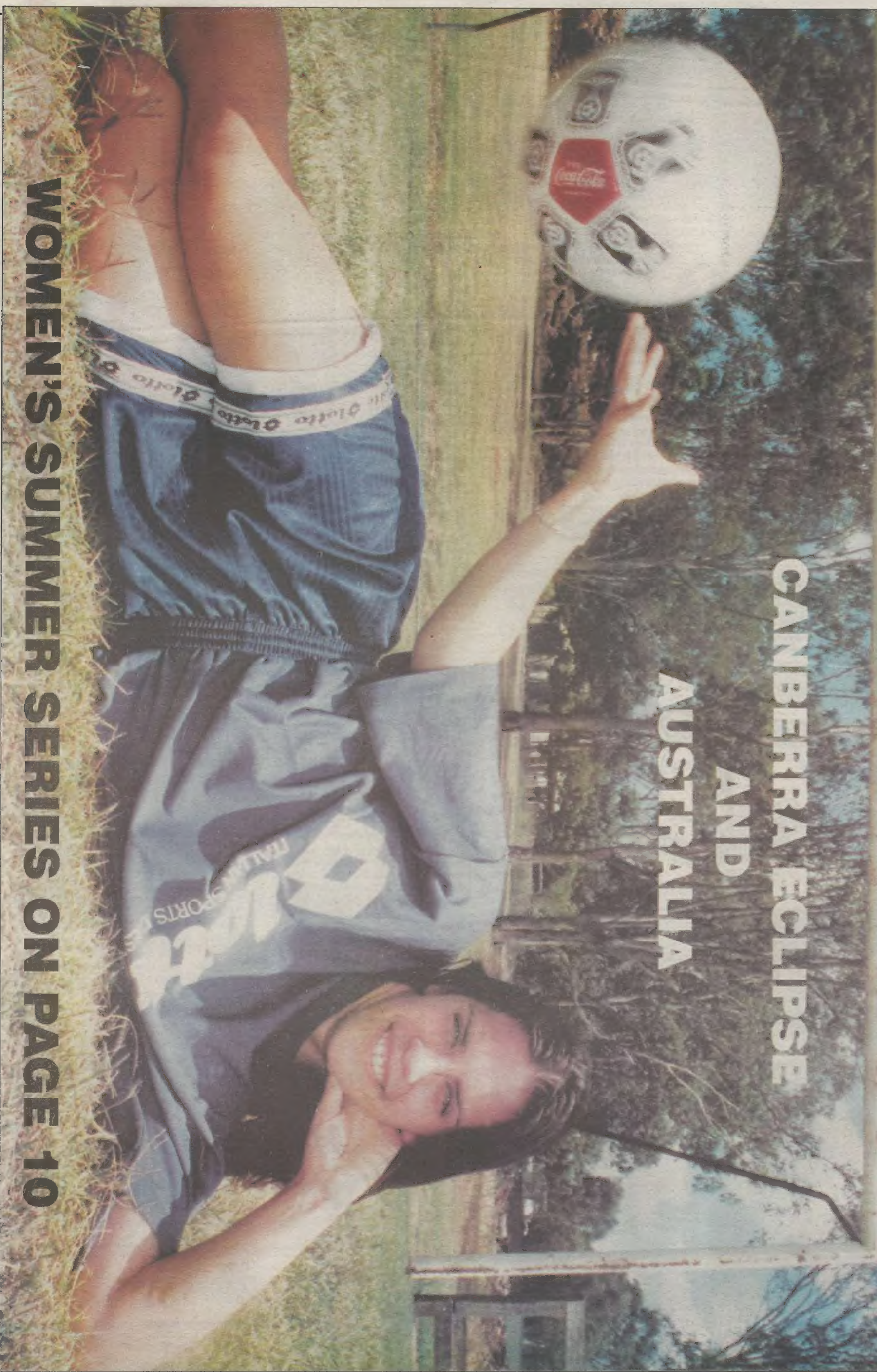
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